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THE FIRST WORLD GO CHAMPIONSHIP THE FUJITSU CUP

A new page is being written in the 3000-year history of the game of go. For the first time a tournament to decide the world's top player: the 1st World Go Championship - The Fujitsu Cup. A long-cherished dream of all go fans is realized as the top professional players from around the world compete to prove themselves the world's strongest player. In sponsoring this tournament, Fujitsu's aim is to deepen the bonds of friendship among the people of the world.

Organized by: The Yomiuri Shimbun, The Nihon Ki-in and The Kansai Ki-in.

Supported by: Nippon Television Network Corporation.

Sponsored by: FUJITSU Limited.

With the cooperation of: Chinese Weiqi Association, Korean Baduk Association, American Go Association, European Go Federation, Japan Air Lines.



Participants: 16 players from 6 professional bodies

The Nihon Ki-in
(Japan Go Association)

Koichi KOBAYASHI
Masao KATO
Masaki TAKEMIYA
Chikun CHO

Kaiho RIN

The Kansai Ki-in
(Western Japan Go Association)

Yutaka SHIRAISHI
Toshiya IMAMURA

Chinese Weiqi Association

Weiping NIE
Xiaochun MA
Dayuan CAO
Bin YU

Korean Baduk Association
(Korean Go Association)

Hun Hyun CHO
Bong-Soo SEO
Doo-Jin JANG

American Go Association
Jung Ho LIM
European Go Federation
Ronald SCHLEMPER

1988 Tournament schedule

Round 1: Saturday, April 2

Round 2: Saturday, June 4

Round 3: Saturday, July 2

Playoff for 3rd place: Monday, July 4

Playoff for 1st place: Saturday, September 3

FUJITSU

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Go World News

Takemiya Defends Honinbo Title

In a thrilling seesaw match Takemiya emerged victorious in the 7th game, defeating the challenger Otake Hideo and winning his fourth Honinbo title in a row. The first Honinbo title clash to go the full distance in five years saw an epic struggle between two artists of the go board; in the end the master of centre play came out on top, but he had far from an easy time of it. In fact, the main feature of this series was Takemiya's extraordinarily slow play. This is ironic, for he has been a frequent advocate of reduced time allowances. Otake actually started the slow play when he took two hours 33 minutes over the sealed move in the fourth game, which is undoubtedly a personal record for him, but Takemiya far outdid him in the fifth game, when he spent five hours seven minutes on the sealed move. This is a record for modern tournament play with time limits that will not easily be broken.

Apart from the sealed move mentioned above, Otake played quite fast most of the time; the contrast in playing speed was most marked in the 6th game, where on the first day Takemiya took seven hours 44 minutes to Otake's 27 minutes. This gap in time used is probably also a record.

The consensus among professionals seems to be that on the whole Takemiya played better than Otake and deserved to defend the title. A number of the games featured brilliant play by Takemiya in the centre, leading one professional to comment that Takemiya's strategic understanding of the four or five lines around the centre point is probably something new in professional go. With six Honinbo titles, including four in a row, Takemiya is beginning to establish himself as one of the great Honinbos.

Results:

Game 1 (10, 11 May, Paris). Otake (W) won by resig.

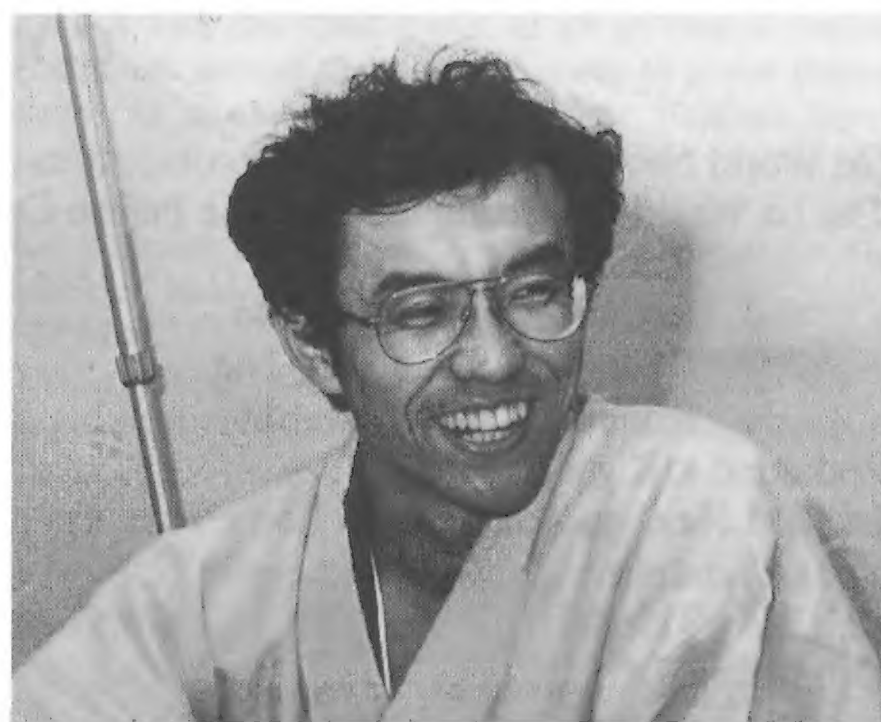
Game 2 (26, 27 May). Takemiya (W) won by resig.

Game 3 (8, 9 June). Takemiya (B) won by 4 1/2 points.

Game 4 (16, 17 June). Otake (B) won by 6 1/2 points.

Game 5 (29, 30 June). Takemiya (B) won by resig.

Game 6 (6, 7 July). Otake (B) won by resig.



Takemiya completes his toughest defence of the Honinbo title.

Game 7 (20, 21 July). Takemiya (B) won by resig.

Cho Takes the Judan Title

As reported in our previous issue, Kato made a great comeback in the 26th Judan title match, winning the third and fourth games after losing the first two, but Cho managed to reverse his momentum in the fifth game, played on 28 April. With two titles now, Cho seems to be on his way back to top form.

Kobayashi Leads Kato in Gosei Title

The defending champion, Kato Masao, has made a bad start in the 13th Gosei title match. The challenger, Kobayashi Koichi, has won the first two games and needs only one more win to take his first Gosei title. Kato is faced with his third loss in a row in a title match this year.

Results to date:

Game 1 (25 June). Kobayashi (B) won by resig.

Game 2 (14 July). Kobayashi (W) won by resig.

In the playoff to decide the challenger, held on 1 June, Kobayashi defeated Ishida Akira. Ishida has been having a nightmarish time in the Meijin league this year, but in this tournament he defeated Otake, Cho, and Rin to reach the playoff.

Meijin Challenger: Rin, Kobayashi or Shuko?

The Meijin league has been thrown into confusion, mainly through the efforts of Fujisawa Shuko, who in his last two games has beaten two

13th Meijin League (as of 31 July 1988)

Rank	Player	R	K	C	I.A.	T	F	I.Y.	O	A	Score
1	Rin Kaiho	—	0	0	1	1	1	1	1		5—2
2	Kobayashi K.	1	—	1	1	1	0		0	1	5—2
3	Cho Chikun	1	0	—	1	1	0	1	1	0	5—3
4	Ishida Akira	0	0	0	—	0	0	0			0—6
5	Takemiya	0	0	0	1	—		0	1	1	3—4
6	Fujisawa S.	0	1	1	1		—	0	1	1	5—2
7	Ishida Yoshio	0		0	1	1	1	—	0	1	4—3
7	Ohira	0	1	0		0	0	1	—	0	2—5
7	Awaji		0	1		0	0	0	1	—	2—4

Note: Players are ranked according to their results in the previous league



Shuko still has what it takes.

of the front-runners, Kobayashi Koichi and Cho Chikun. At the moment there is a three-way tie among Shuko, Rin and Kobayashi. Cho is already out of the running, because in the event of a multiple tie there is a playoff between the two higher-ranked players in the tie. This rule also handicaps Shuko a little.

Ishida Akira has done very badly in this league, but earlier in the year he was commuting from hospital to play his games (he was suffering from condyle necrosis). The other player certain to drop out is Ohira.

China Wins Big in 16th Go Exchange

This year a Chinese team toured Japan in April in the 16th Japan–China Go Exchange. These tours used to be the main forum for go exchange between the two countries, but lately they have been a little overshadowed by the various

other international competitions. For some reason, Japan did not see its way to fielding very strong teams this year (no title-holders played), so the predictable result was a walkover by the Chinese team. The final score after seven team matches was 39–17 in China's favour. This is China's best result since 1982, when it scored 43–13, but actually this year's results have to be considered as superior, because in 1982 13 of the wins were against amateurs, who for some years now have been excluded from the Japanese teams. In the individual best-of-three matches included in the team matches, the Chinese took the honours with 12 wins to 4 losses.

The only bright spot for the Japanese side was a victory by the great veteran player Sakata, whose autobiography is featured in this issue, over Nie Weiping. This was Nie's only loss on the tour. In the best-of-threes he beat Hashimoto Utao, given a demanding job as team captain at the age of 81, and Awaji Shuzo; he also beat Ishii Kunio 9-dan and Komatsu Hideki 6-dan.

13th Kisei Title

The first stage of this tournament has now been completed, with the following players coming out on top in the dan sections.

1-dan: Oki Keiji

2-dan: Matsuoka Hideki

3-dan: Shimada Yoshikuni (Kansai Ki-in)

4-dan: Yamada Wakio

5-dan: Yuki Satoshi (Michael Redmond lost in the semifinal).

6-dan: Komatsu Hideki

7-dan: Yoda Norimoto

8-dan: Kataoka Satoshi

9-dan: Ohira Shuzo (defeated Sakata Eio in the final).

Results to date in the Second Stage:

Matsuoka beat Oki, Shimada and Yamada, then lost to Yuki, who lost to Komatsu. Komatsu then beat Hikosaka (2nd in 7-dan section), so he wins a place in the second part of this stage, which leads to the playoff to decide the Kisei challenger.

Cho Wins Japan-China Tengen Match

The latest arrival on the international go scene in the Far East is a match between the holders of the Japanese and Chinese Tengen titles. Cho Chikun is the holder of the 13th Japanese Tengen title, but in China the Tianyuan title, as it is known there, is only two years old. Ma Xiaochun won it in 1987 and Liu Xiaoguang this year, defeating Ma 3-2 in the title match.

The first match between the title-holders of the two countries was held in Tokyo in June this year and was won 2-0 by Cho Chikun. With this victory, Cho Chikun maintains his record as the only Nihon Ki-in player undefeated in international competition.

Liu resigned the first game, played on 20 June, after going wrong in byo-yomi, but the second game was a very tight contest which Cho won by a bare half point. It is planned to hold this match every year.

1st U.S. Professional Match

Jimmy Cha 4-dan of Los Angeles defeated Janice Kim 1-dan from New York in the first formal meeting between United States professionals. The best-of-three match, sponsored by the Seattle Sheraton Hotel and Towers and by United Airlines, was held on 20 and 21 May at the Sheraton Hotel in Seattle, Washington. Cha won the first two games by resignation. The first game was rather one-sided, but the second was a close struggle. A game commentary will appear in a future issue of *Go World*.

Jimmy Cha impressed the spectators with his comments on the match, his play in simultaneous games in the evening and his willingness to work to assist the go-playing community in the U.S.

The two players had first met each other about five years ago. Cha defeated Janice Kim in a handicap game when she was amateur 5-dan. She had looked forward to this match as a

chance to even the score against him. However, by the end of the second day Janice had to be content with her resolution to be more mentally prepared for the next encounter with her strong opponent.

The event was also noteworthy because it marked the first time that any major U.S. corporation has directly sponsored a go event of any kind in the U.S.

News in Brief

36th Oza Title

Semifinal pairings in this title, held by Kato, are Rin v. Kobayashi Koichi and Kobayashi Satoru v. Awaji.

Bilingual book on WAGC

Every year the Nihon Ki-in publishes a book in magazine format covering the WAGC. This year, for the first time, the book will be bilingual, with page-by-page English translations of the main articles. The book will be available in August and can be ordered from the Ishi Press for ¥1,800.

New Professionals in China

Nine more players have been recognized as professionals by the China Weiqi Association, bringing the total to 45. Among them are Yu Bin 7-dan, who came second in the 9th WAGC, and Jiang Meixiu 7-dan, the older brother of Jiang Zhujiu 9-dan.

New Honour for Nie Weiping

In recognition of his remarkable performance in the three Super Go series of nine straight wins against top Japanese players, Nie Weiping has been awarded the title of Qixing, which means 'go sage' or 'saint of go'. It is written with the same characters as the Japanese Kisei title, but in Nie's case is an honorific title which he will hold for life.

Liu Wins 1st Mingren Title

The Chinese tournament scene will soon rival the Japanese go scene in number of titles. The latest new title is the Mingren title ('mingren' means 'expert' or 'master' and is written with the same characters as the Japanese term Meijin). The first title was won by Liu Xiaoguang, who defeated Yu Bin 3-1. Liu also holds the Tianyuan title.

The 1st World Go Championship: The Fujitsu Cup



The first world champion: Rin —

Final: Takemiya v. Rin

In our previous issue we presented a report on the first round of the first professional world championship, the Fujitsu Cup. This round was a triumph for the Nihon Ki-in, which had the most representatives participating. All five Nihon Ki-in players won their games. The Nihon Ki-in has continued to do well and two of its players will contest the final, but there have been surprises along the way, with some of the favourites coming to grief.

In the second round (played on 4 June), Nie Weiping beat Kato, thus scoring his fourth win in a row against Kato in the last couple of years and evening his overall record against him at 6-6; Rin Kaiho beat Cho Chikun; Takemiya beat Ma Xiaochun; and Kobayashi Koichi beat Shiraishi.

In one semifinal (played on 2 July), in an historic encounter — the first-ever official game between a Taiwanese and a Communist Chinese player — Rin Kaiho beat Nie Weiping; in the other, Takemiya took revenge for past setbacks by overcoming Kobayashi Koichi with his favourite large-moyo strategy.

The final between Takemiya and Rin will be played on 3 September. These two are both great players and whoever becomes world champion will be fully worthy of the honour, but one

wonders how many fans expected to see Nie and Kobayashi fight it out in the final, especially after another favourite, Cho Hun-hyun of Korea, disappeared in the first round. Surprises like this have made it a very dramatic tournament.

Takemiya's success in reaching the final has, of course, been exactly in line with his prediction. He could have a great year: he has just defended his Honinbo title and he has also reached the semifinals of the IBM international tournament (see page 15). He undoubtedly also has his eye on the richest tournament of all, the Ing Cup.

Below is a selection of games from the first two rounds played. (During the course of this year we plan to present all the games played.)

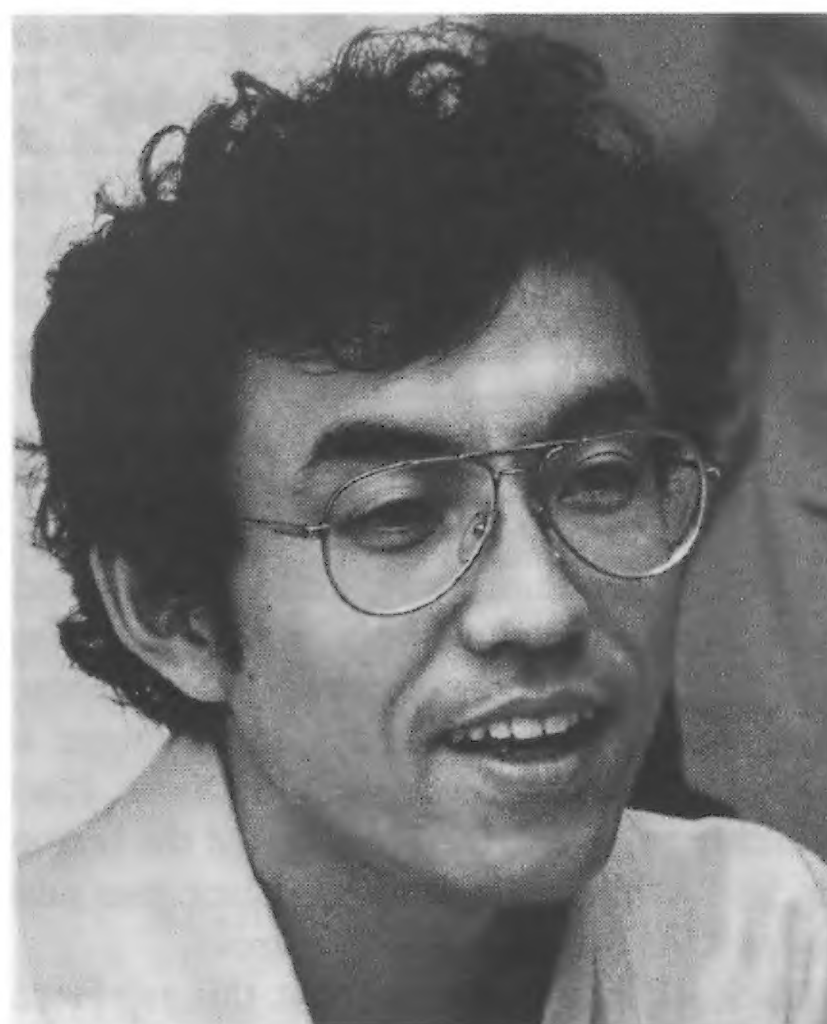
Round 2: Nie v. Kato

White: Nie Weiping (China)

Black: Kato Masao (Japan)

Played at the Nihon Ki-in on 4 June 1988.

Commentary by Ishida Yoshio 9-dan.



or Takemiya?

Fujisawa Shuko was very critical of Kato's play in this game, but he called it a masterpiece for Nie. Kato played a tight, nervous game, which perhaps indicates that his losing streak against Nie is beginning to worry him.

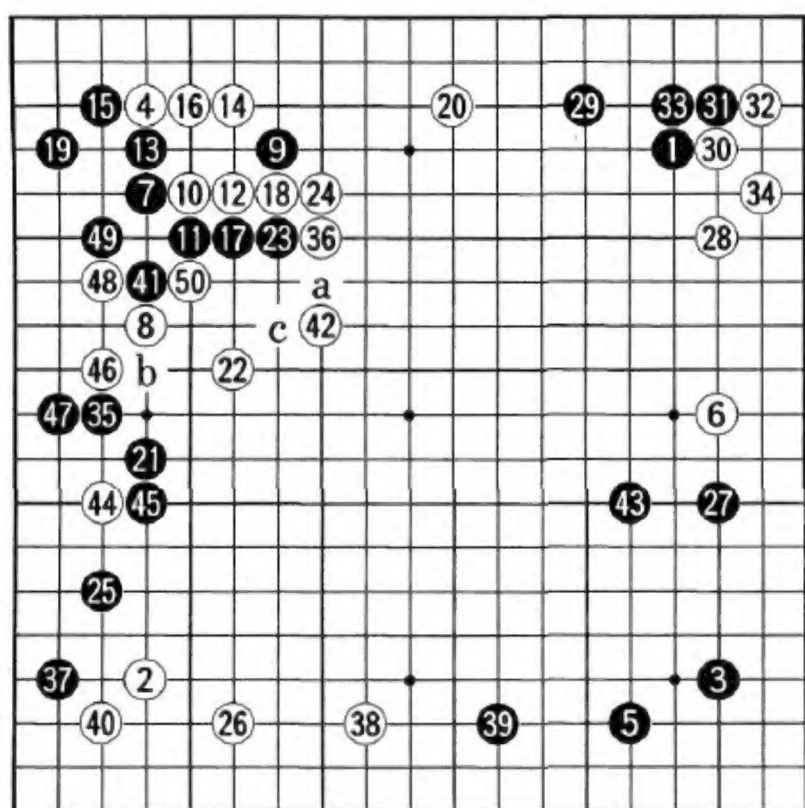
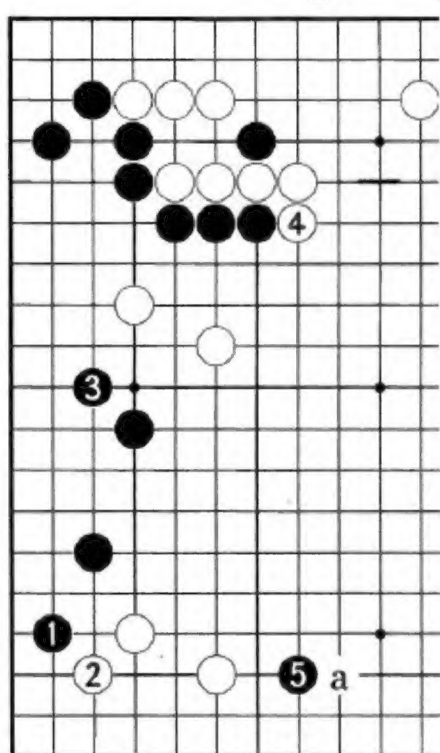
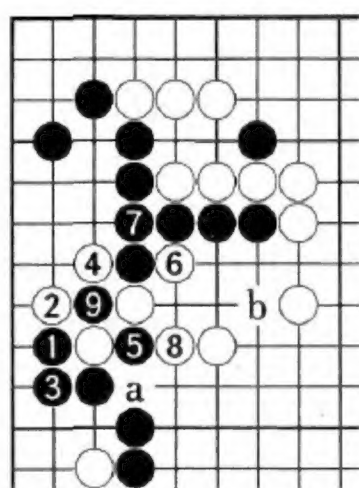


Figure 1 (1-50)



Dia. 1



Dia. 2

Figure 1 (1-50). A poor start by Kato

Black 35 is a thick move, but if Black intends to play 37 next, he should play it first, according to Ishida Yoshio, who gave a public commentary at the Nihon Ki-in while the games were in progress. If White answers at 2 in *Dia. 1*, Black can exchange 3 for 4, then play first at the bottom with 5. If White plays 2 at 'a', Black can push along at 4. At this stage 4 is a big move.

Black 41 is a probe; without this reinforcement, Black can't hane at 'a'. However, Shuko thought that the exchange for 42, which secures centre influence for White, was very bad. He advocated simply jumping to 43.

White 44 is a resolute move. The exchange for 45 loses points, but Nie wants to make 46 sente.

Black 47 is very slack: it should be at 1 in *Dia.*

2. A ko follows after 9, but even if Black gives way and connects at 'a', he can aim at 'b'.

Kato: 'I wonder if I should have played 43 at 'b'. I was a little crestfallen after Black 47.'

With the sequence of 46 to 50, White plays some satisfying forcing moves. All he has to do now is to reduce Black's bottom-right moyo in such a way that Black can't aim at 'c'.

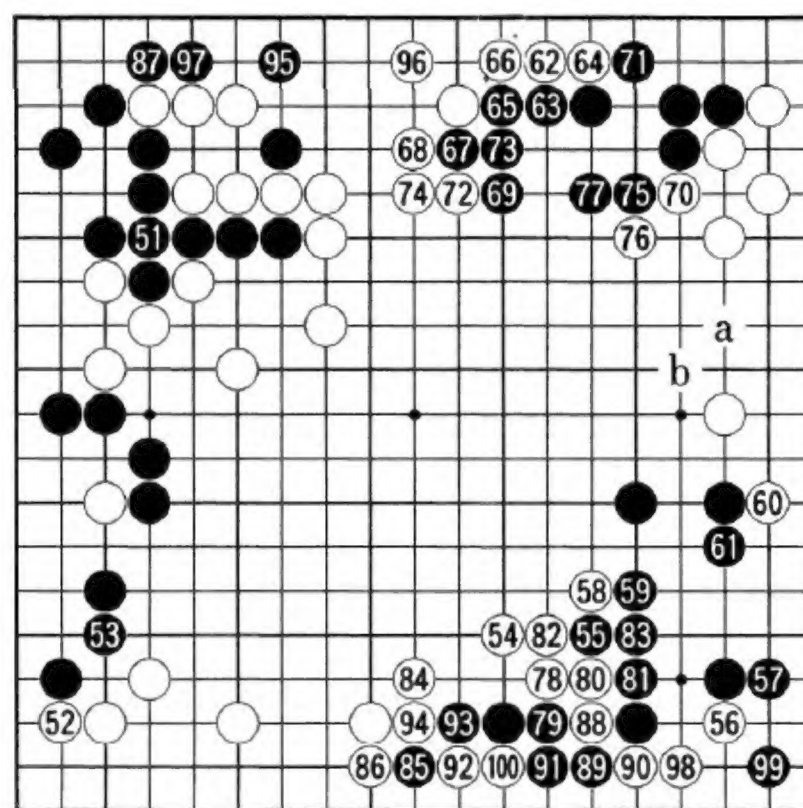
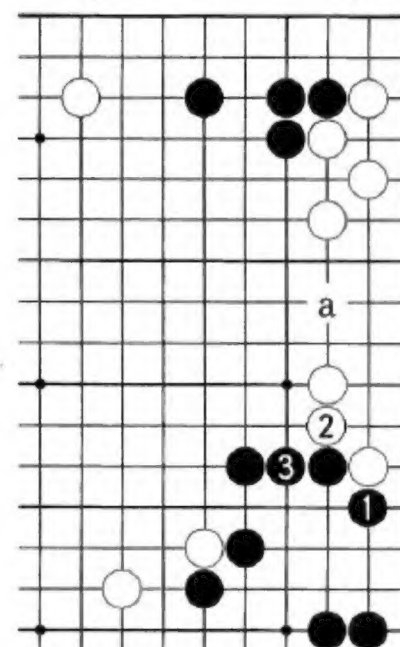


Figure 2 (51-100)



Dia. 3

Figure 2 (51-100). Nie takes charge.

Black 55. Kato: 'I should have counterattacked with Black 84. In a sense, Black is letting White push him around here.'

Black 61 is a patient move. If Black 1 in *Dia. 3*, White 2 makes it harder for Black to invade at 'a'.

White 62 is big in itself; also, by attacking Black White hopes to deny him the opportunity to invade at 'a'. The continuation to 77 is inevitable. If Black omits 75, White 77 will stop him from getting two eyes. If Black invades at 'a' after

76, White 'b' will put him on the spot.

White 78–82. This simple forcing sequence is enough.

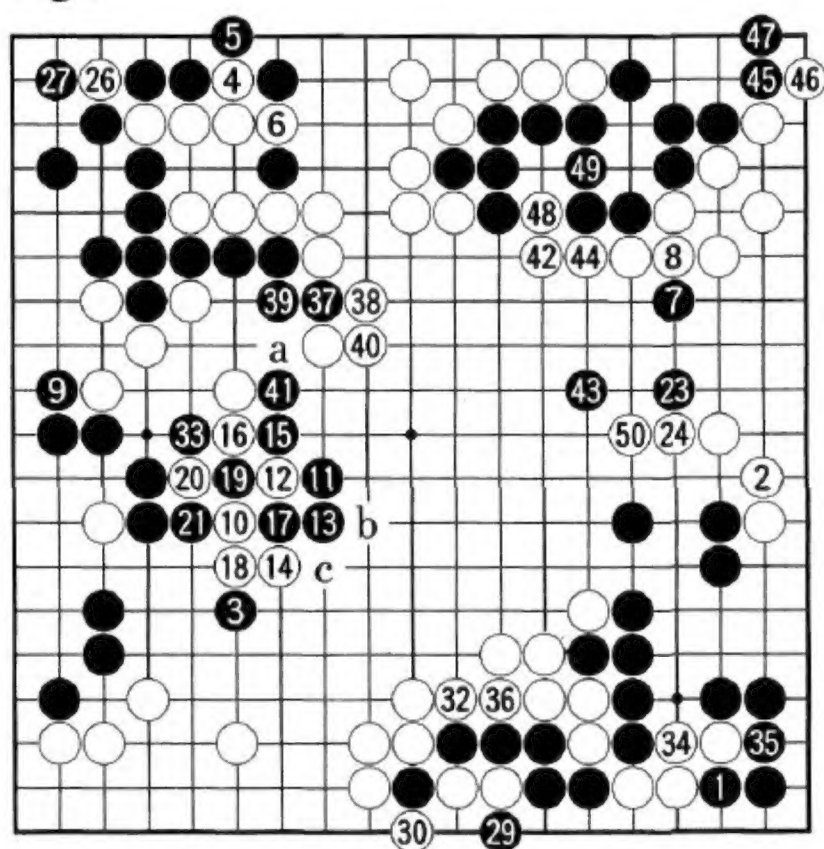
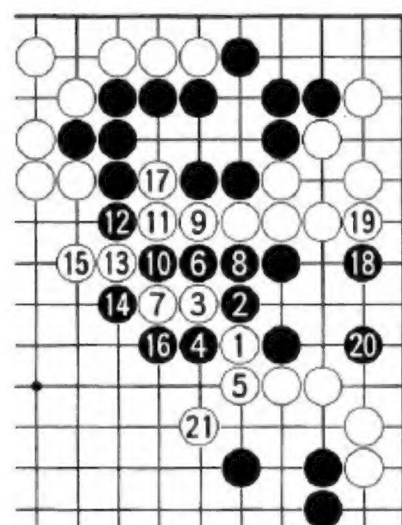


Figure 3 (101–150)
ko: 22, 25, 28, 31



Dia. 4

Figure 3 (101–150). *Kato narrows the gap.*

Kato is behind, so he launches a challenge with 11; he is still aiming at 'a'. Black 18 instead would just let White reinforce by pulling back at 17.

Nie replies aggressively with 12: he is not afraid of a ko fight. (More solid would be White 12 at 13: if then Black 12, White connects at 17; if instead Black 'b', then White 'c'.)

Black ignores White's ko threat at 32, so a trade follows. It is favourable for Black, so he catches up a little.

White 42. White sets out to torment the black group. Up to 66 in the next figure, he wrenches off the two black stones on the side, so the result is a success, but actually playing 42 at 1 in *Dia. 4* would be good enough to secure a win. If Black tries to escape with 2, he can save his stones, but

only at the cost of losing the group above. Note that if Black plays 20 at 21, White lives with 20.

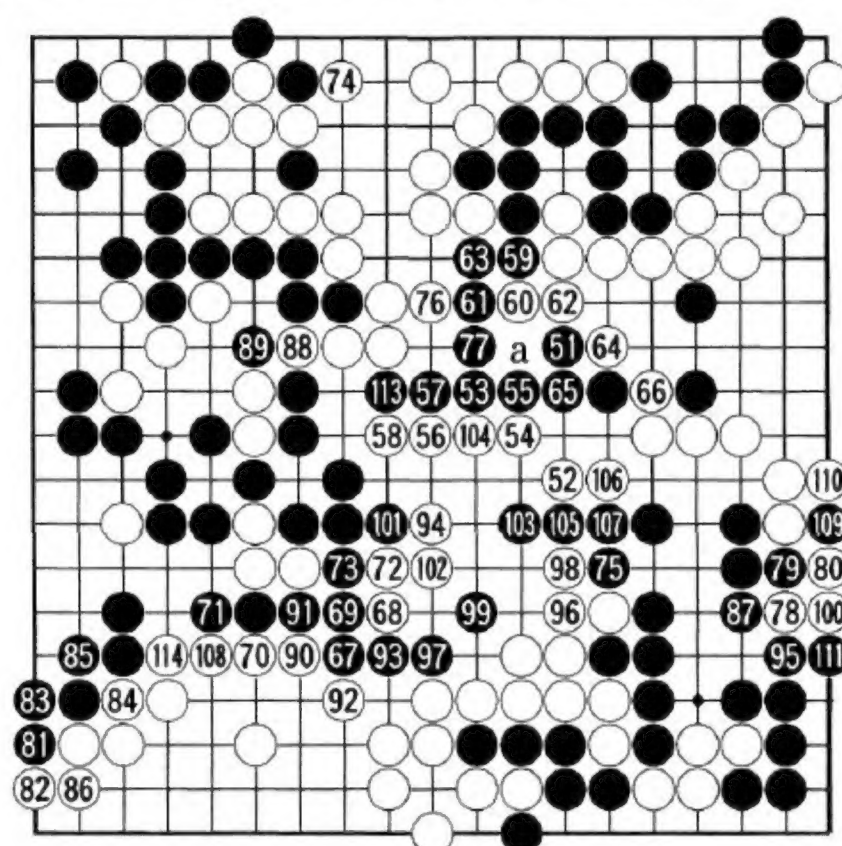


Figure 4 (151–214)
112: connects

Figure 4 (151–214). *A convincing win for Nie*

Black 53. If at 'a', White can't cut off the two stones on the side, but then the whole group will be unable to link up.

When Kato resigned, he was about three points behind on the board. This was a game in which Nie showed to advantage; Kato showed none of the boldness and tenacity that have won him so many titles. Clearly, Nie has a psychological edge on him.

Nie's win was undoubtedly big news in China. The state-run Central TV (CCTV) station sent two directors, with Nie's wife Kong Shangming to act as commentator, to cover his appearance in this tournament. Nie is a national hero in his homeland, and players from other countries can only envy the kind of coverage he gets.

Black resigns after White 214.

Round 2: Takemiya v. Ma

This game was the reverse of the previous one, with the Japanese player scoring an easy win over his Chinese opponent. For Takemiya, this was his chance to take revenge for his defeat at Ma's hands in the 3rd Super Go series. With his customary blithe optimism, Takemiya had predicted before the first round that he would win this tournament; so far, he has been as good as his word.

White: Ma Xiaochun 9-dan (China)
Black: Takemiya Masaki Honinbo (Japan)
 Played on 4 June 1988. *Commentary by Takemiya.*

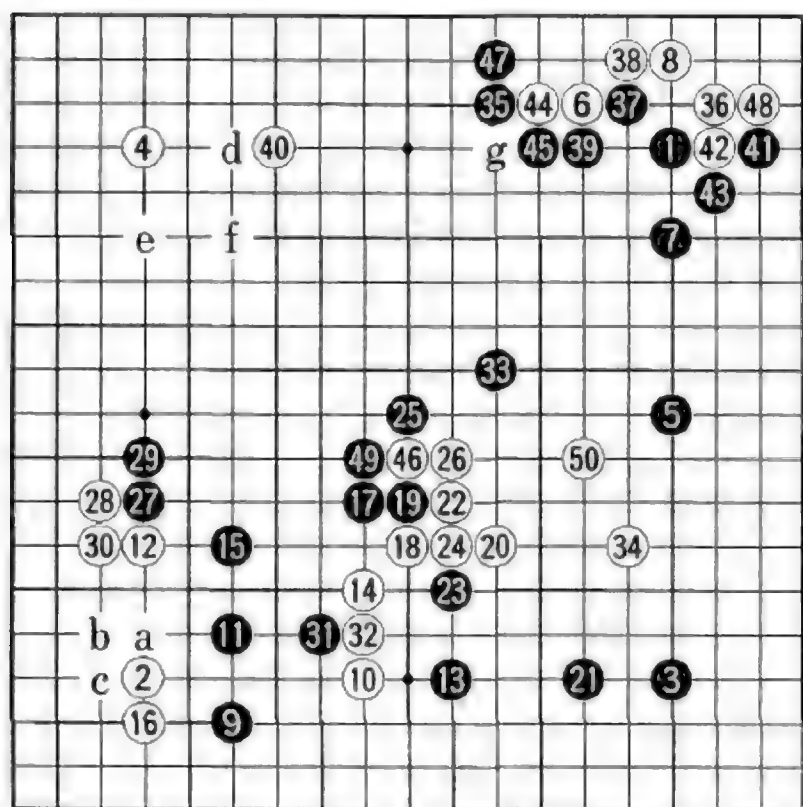
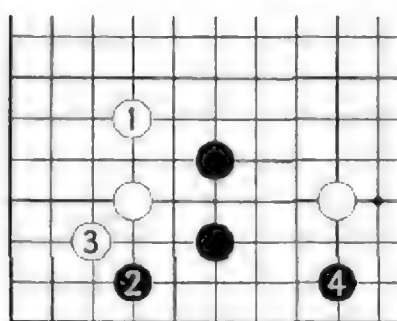


Figure 1 (1-50)



Dia. 1

Figure 1 (1-50). A fuseki innovation — and a failure

Readers of Takemiya's yonren-sei article in GW51 will note that Black 9 is a further development of the strategy he described there.

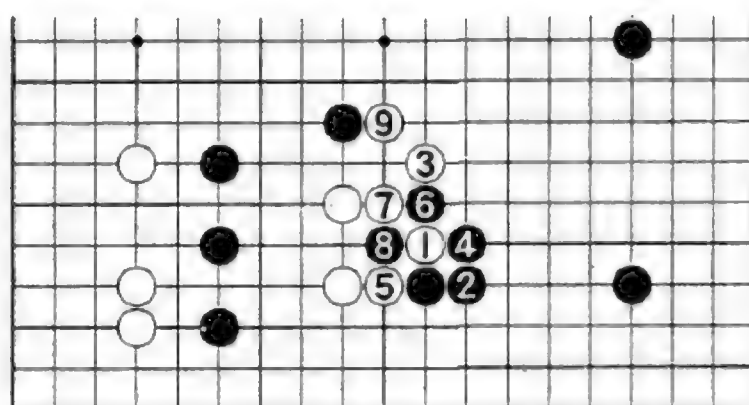
Ma comes up with the interesting counter of 12. Takemiya of course wanted *Dia. 1*. White 12 stops this because now White would get too big a corner.

The drawback is that White has to add a stone at 16. He would like to jump to 17, but then he has trouble dealing with Black 'a', White 'b', Black 'c'. Takemiya is satisfied when he caps at 17. White's group becomes quite heavy in the ensuing fight.

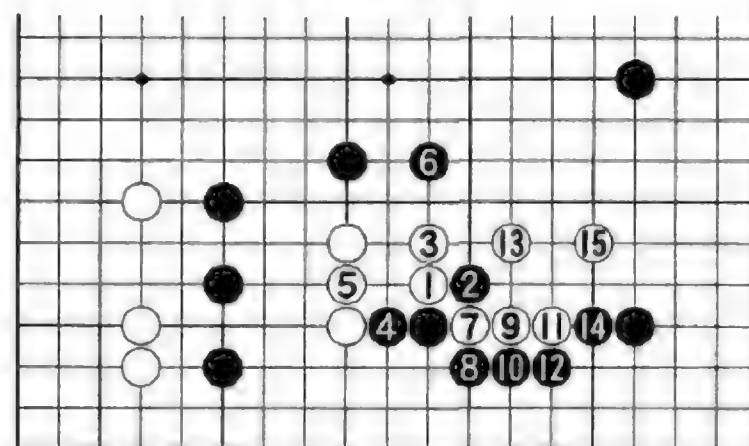
Takemiya did not comment on it, but Shuko (in a commentary in the August *Kido*) was very critical of the bent-back posture of White 18, which he called the losing move. His reason was that in the continuation to 33, Black defends the bottom right and takes control of the centre, while White's group still doesn't have definite eye

shape. He insisted that White had to play the standard sequence shown in *Dia. 2* instead of 18. If Black hanes at 2 in *Dia. 3*, White plays 3 and 5, making miai of 6 and 7. Either result would be superior to that in the figure.

Takemiya continues to build thickness with 37 and 39. Black 37 at 'd' would be a big move, but after White 'e' and Black 'f', White would nullify Black's centre thickness by attaching at 'g'.



Dia. 2



Dia. 3

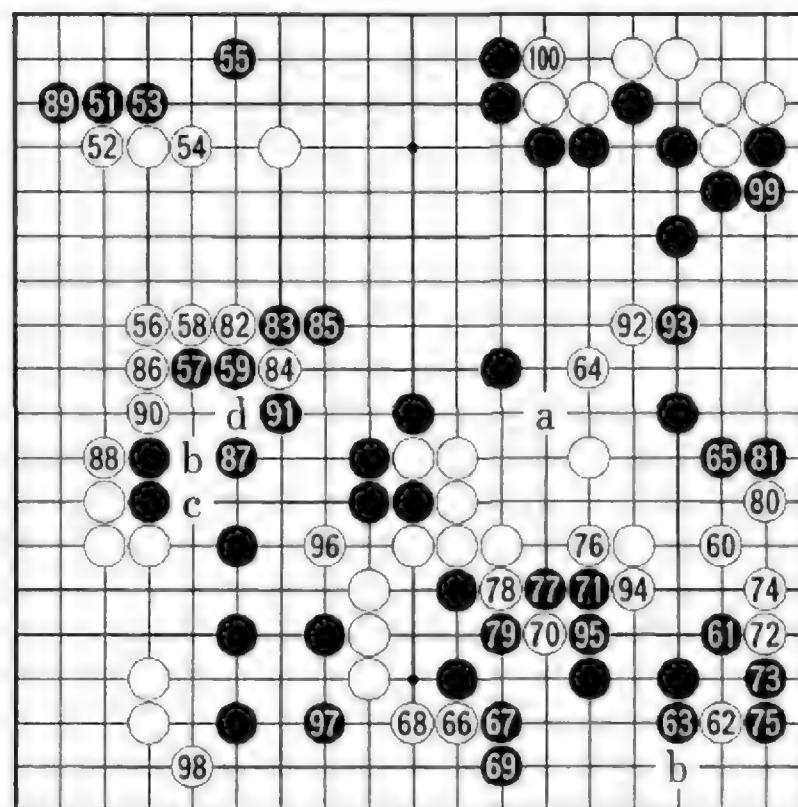
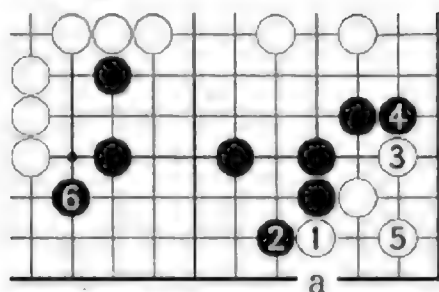


Figure 2 (51-100)

Figure 2 (51-100). Regrets by Takemiya

Black 51 was the first move Takemiya regretted. Takemiya: 'Defending at 'a' would have made a magnificent position and been more like my usual style. I yielded to the temptation to go for territory . . .' White 64 is a good point

which makes the game even.



Dia. 4

White 66. This is a turning point. White could try to destroy the corner as in *Dia. 4*, where 1 to 5 give a ko. Takemiya: 'Instead of starting the ko immediately, I intended to play the probe of 6, taking away the eyes of the centre group. This way White will probably feel nervous.' White 66 helps build eye shape, but it loses the corner aji (if White 'b' after 69, White kills him outright with 75).

The aim of White 70 is to destroy the threat of Black 76, but instead of answering meekly Black makes a sharp counterattack at 71. White loses points up to 79. This is now a big corner.

Takemiya: 'White may have taken sente, but the presence of the black stone at 77 means that his group as a whole doesn't have eyes yet. I think that Black can now make a territorial fight of it.'

Black 83 has to be at 84: Black can't resist White 86. If Black 87 at 88, White captures two stones with White 'b', Black 'c', White 'd'. Black loses points when White links up with 88 and 90. However, he is still ahead.

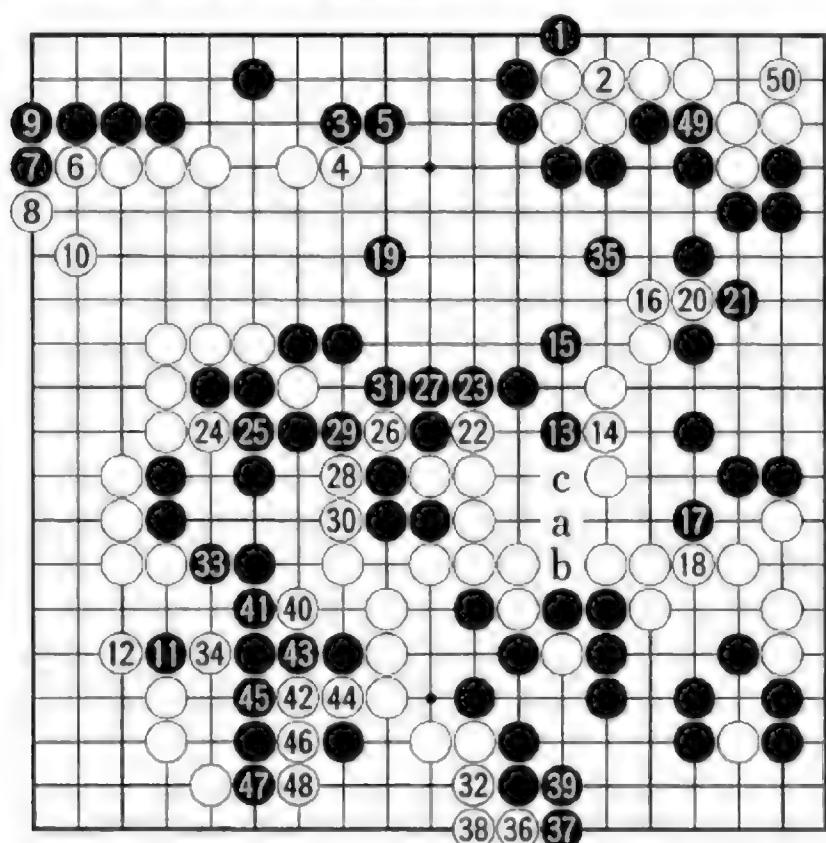


Figure 3 (101-150)

Figure 1 (101-150). *Takemiya coasts.*

Black 19. Black could stop the white group on the side from getting two eye swith Black 'a',

White 'b', Black 'c', but he is not interested in killing this group. Black 19 is enough to win. Black has some weak positions, so if he tried to capture White, a mistake could lead his attack to backfire on him.

Black 35. Connecting at 44 would be bigger. Takemiya overlooked the sequence from 42 to 48.

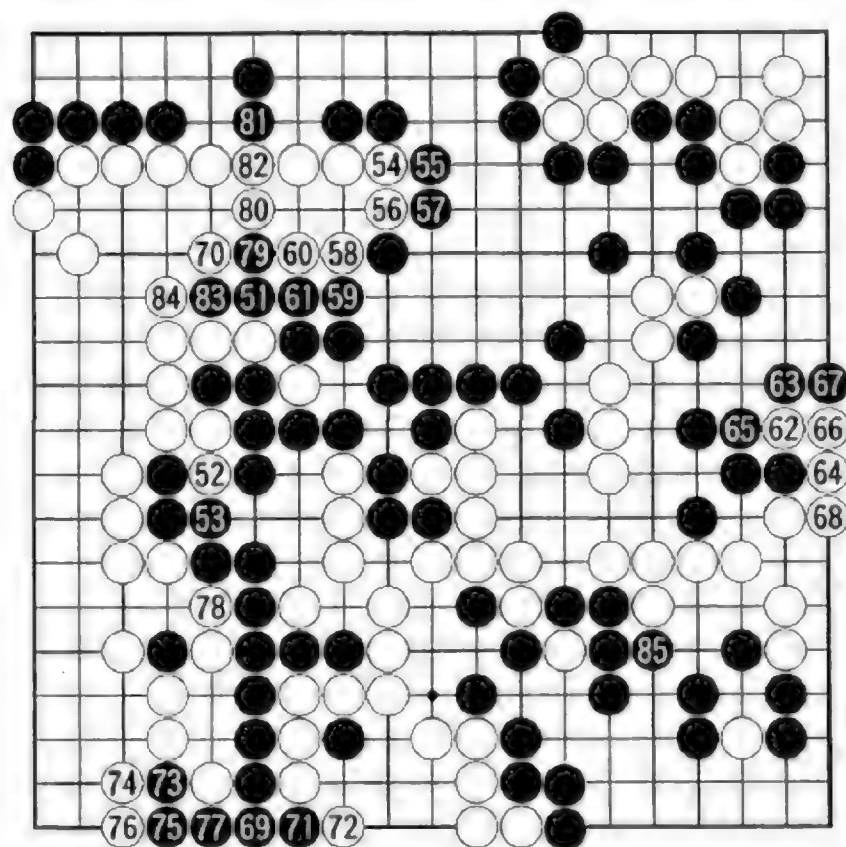


Figure 4 (151-185)

Figure 4 (151-185). *An impressive win*

Takemiya was satisfied with this game. It's a good example of his winning pattern. He sets up a big moyo, attacks the opponent when he comes into it and in the process black territory accumulates naturally.

When Ma resigned, he was 9 1/2 points behind, according to Takemiya's calculations. This victory made his career record against Ma two wins to three losses. After this game, Takemiya took Nie drinking on the Ginza and the two made a promise to meet in the final. Nie was not able to carry out his side of the bargain.

White resigns after Black 185.

Round 1: Schlemper v. Nie

One of the great virtues of a tournament like this is that it provides Western amateurs with a precious opportunity to play one of the world's top players on even terms. Of course, one can't expect an amateur from any country to test a player like Nie, but still the experience is a valuable one. In Ronald Schlemper's case, he made the most of it, adopting a bold moyo strategy that made Nie watch his step.

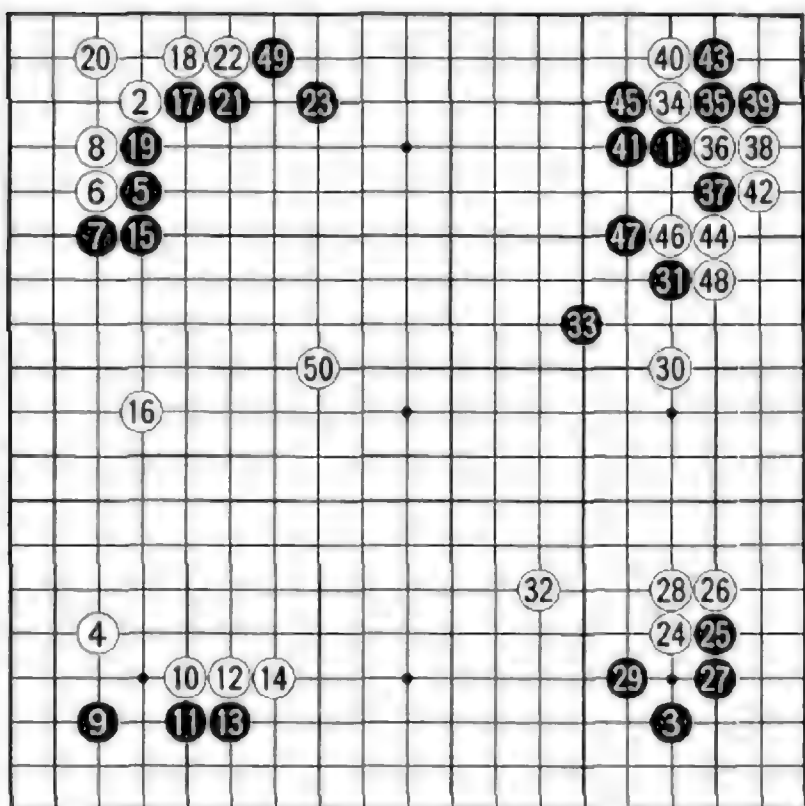


Figure 1 (1-50)

Ronald won the European Fujitsu Cup qualifying tournament, in which 26 players from 12 countries competed, with a perfect score. Previously, he had played Nie on four stones in Paris in 1978, when a Chinese group made its first visit to the European Go Congress, then two games on two stones last year in Hong Kong, on the occasion of the World Youth Championship. He lost all these games, but Nie commented: 'Those were all teaching games — a real contest is different. I couldn't afford to lose. I was tense. So I avoided risky moves.'

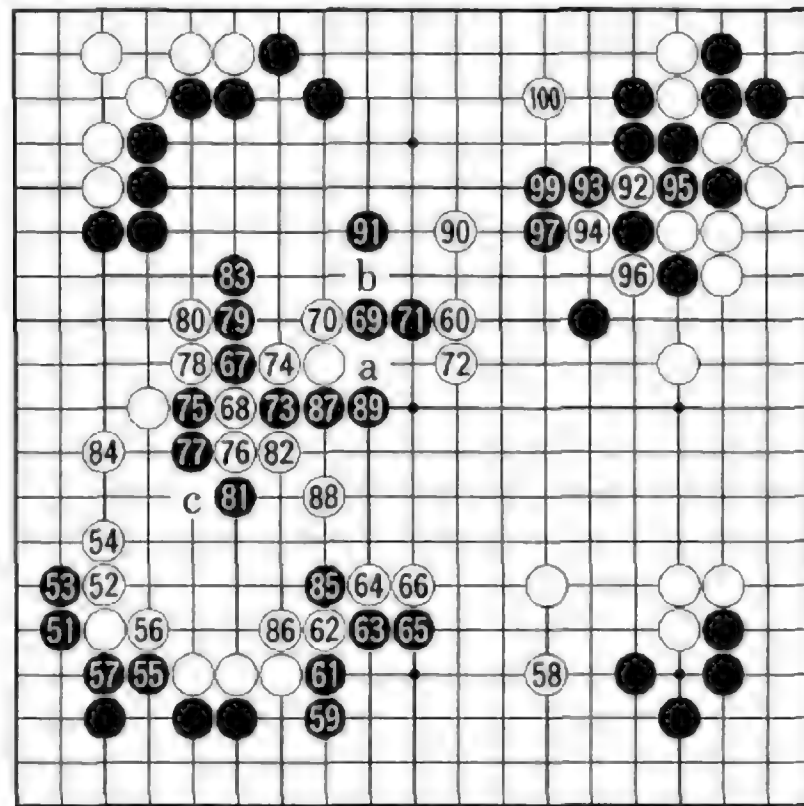


Figure 2 (51-100)

98: ko

White: Ronald Schlemper (Holland)

Black: Nie Weiping (China)

Played at the Nihon Ki-in on 2 April 1988.

Figure 1 (1-50). *A fair start by White*

White 34 is a good, well-timed move. White takes a lot of profit up to 48. White 50 is also a good move.

Figure 2 (51-100). *The game is decided.*

White 70. Going for territory with 70 at 'a',

followed by Black 78, White 75, Black 74, White 73, would leave White behind.

Nie spent a lot of time on 71. Nie: 'My first instinct was to pull back at 'b', but when I counted I found that this was not enough for Black. That's why I decided to fight with 71 and 73. Playing the facile move would have been dangerous.'

White 80. White could capture two stones with 'c'. Nie: 'Of course, that way White would probably lose by about ten points on the board. That must be why White launched his challenge, but the game was decided when Black captured three stones up to 89.'

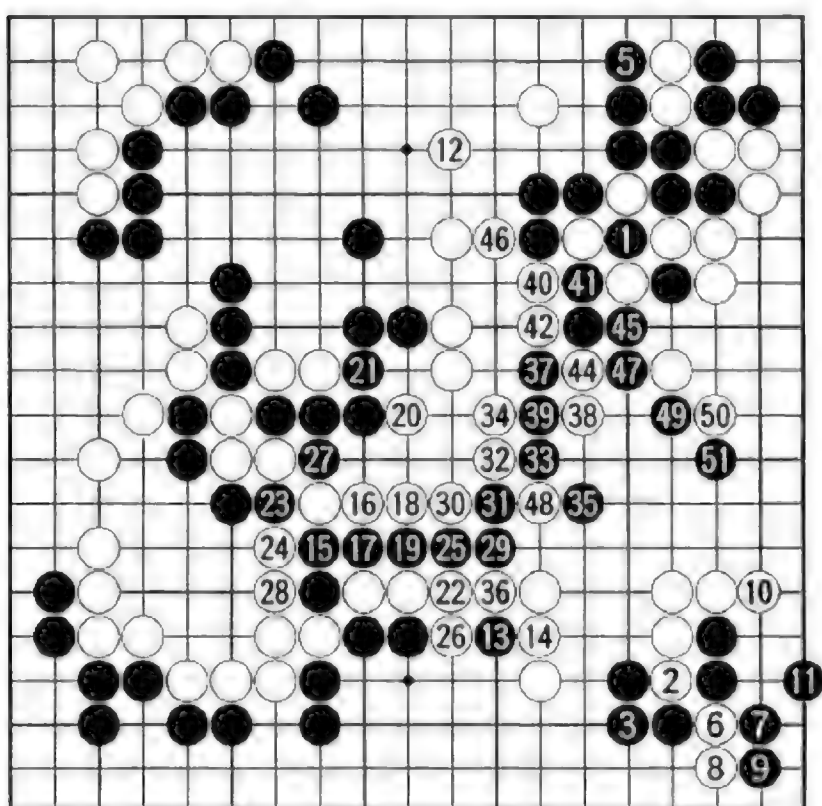


Figure 3 (101-151)

4: ko; 43: takes two stones (at 1)

Figure 3 (101-151). *Mopping up.*

Ronald fought on, but he was dogged by the bad aji in his centre-left group.

White resigns after Black 151.

Round 1: Lim v. Shiraishi

White: Shiraishi Yutaka 9-dan (Kansai Ki-in)

Black: Jung Ho Lim (U.S.A.)

Played at the Nihon Ki-in on 2 April 1988.

Figure 1 (1-100)

The start is quite good for Black. White 24 is heavy; Black builds nice thickness up to 31. White invades aggressively at 34 to catch up.

Black 37. Better to fight with Black 47.

The result to 66 looks good for White; in fact, it looks as if Black has fallen into a trap. Ishida Yoshio dismissed the game as being already

decided, but Shiraishi disagreed.

Black 79 is an overplay. Lim probably played there because he thought he was behind, but Shiraishi commented that the game would have been very close if he had patiently defended at 'a'.

Black 81. Black should still play at 'a'. The game is over when Black 81 and 83 are swallowed up.

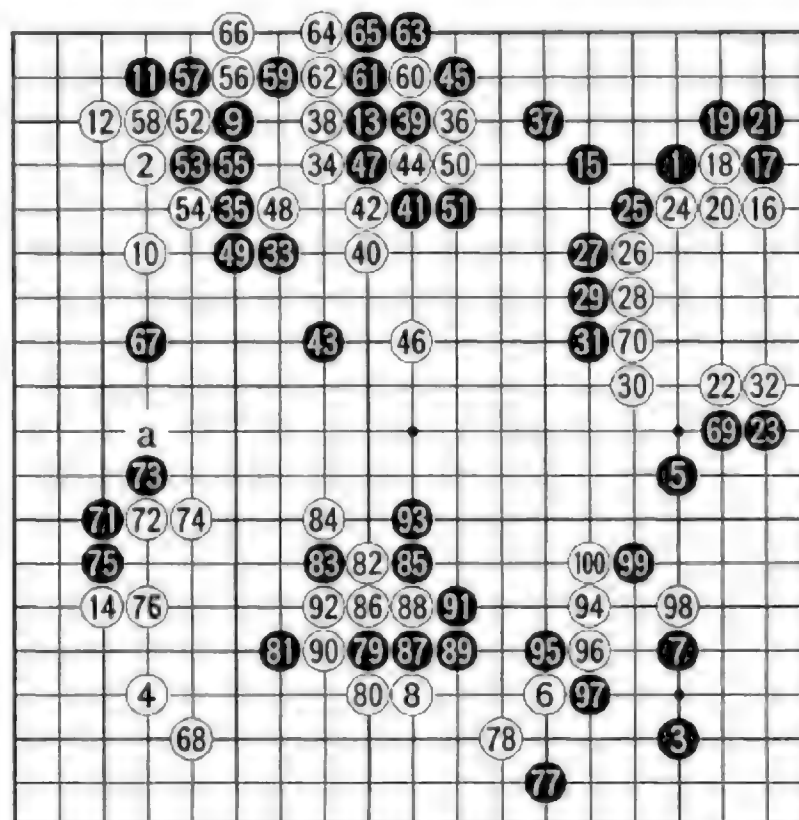


Figure 1 (1-100)

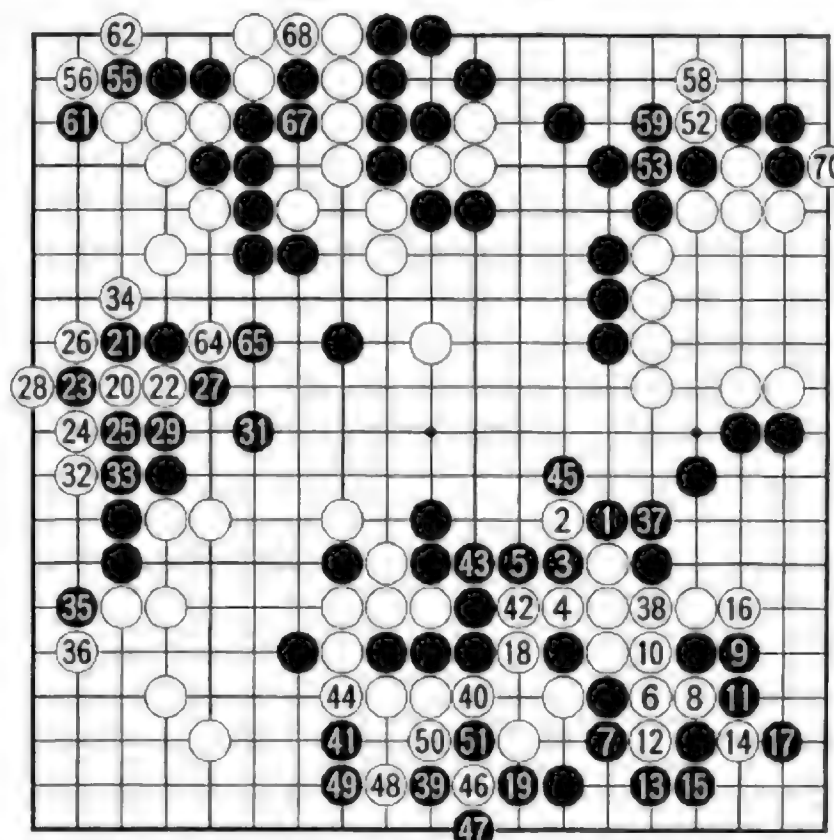


Figure 2 (101-170)

30: connects; ko: 54, 57, 60, 63, 66, 69

Figure 2 (101-170)

White 20 is the coup de grace.

Black resigns after White 170.

(Commentaries taken from the Yomiuri newspaper.

Translated by John Power.)

Redmond v. Kiyonari

The first half of 1988 has been an interesting year for Michael Redmond. He has had some impressive wins and suffered some painful losses. Statistically, he has only done moderately well, with 12 wins to nine losses, which is comparable to 1986 (16-12) but falls well short of his results last year of 21-8.

This year the numbers don't tell the story. The real interest is in the quality of his play, which suggests that he is ready to take a major step forward. Eight of his games this year have been with 9-dans. He made a great start, with wins against Sakakibara and Kiyonari in successive weeks in February. Unfortunately, that was followed by losses to Sonoda, Ishida Akira, Sato Masaharu, Hasegawa Sunao, and Sakai Takeshi, but then, on 30 June, he scored perhaps the most impressive victory in his career to date, against Hashimoto Shoji. This was in the main stage of this year's Judan title.

Each year only 16 professionals win their way into the final stage of the Judan, so here Michael is rubbing shoulders with some of the elite of the go world. In passing, it may be noted that it's very unusual for a player 5-dan or below to get this far in the Judan tournament. In fact, the last time one did so was in 1977. Michael lost to Hasegawa of the Kansai Ki-in in the first round of the winners' section, but then beat Hashimoto in the first round of the losers' section. He is slated to meet either Sakata or Ohira Shuzo next. (He would have to win five games straight to become the challenger.)

Michael of course has had wins against 9-dans in the past, but most professionals can expect to do that on occasion. The significant thing for him is that he now feels that he is much closer than before to fighting them on even terms. In particular, the game against Hashimoto was a good, solid game for him. We plan to present it in our next issue; in the meantime, here is the best of his earlier games this year.

Even losses to 9-dans are valuable learning experiences for a 5-dan, so they are not the 'painful losses' we referred to above. These actually came in the Oteai (rating tournament). Michael entered the spring session (which actually continues into July) well on track for an early promotion to 6-dan, but he has made things tough for himself by losing three of the five games he has played so far. He can still qualify

for 6-dan by winning the next three Oteai games straight, but a loss will hold him back quite a bit.

White: Michael Redmond 5-dan

Black: Kiyonari Tetsuya 9-dan

27th Judan tournament, 3rd preliminary section, 1st round. Played on 25 February 1988.

Commentary by Michael Redmond.

Kiyonari Tetsuya (born in 1961) is one of the leading younger players at the Kansai Ki-in. He holds the speed record for promotion to 9-dan of ten years three months. He won the 7-dan section of the 8th Kisei title.

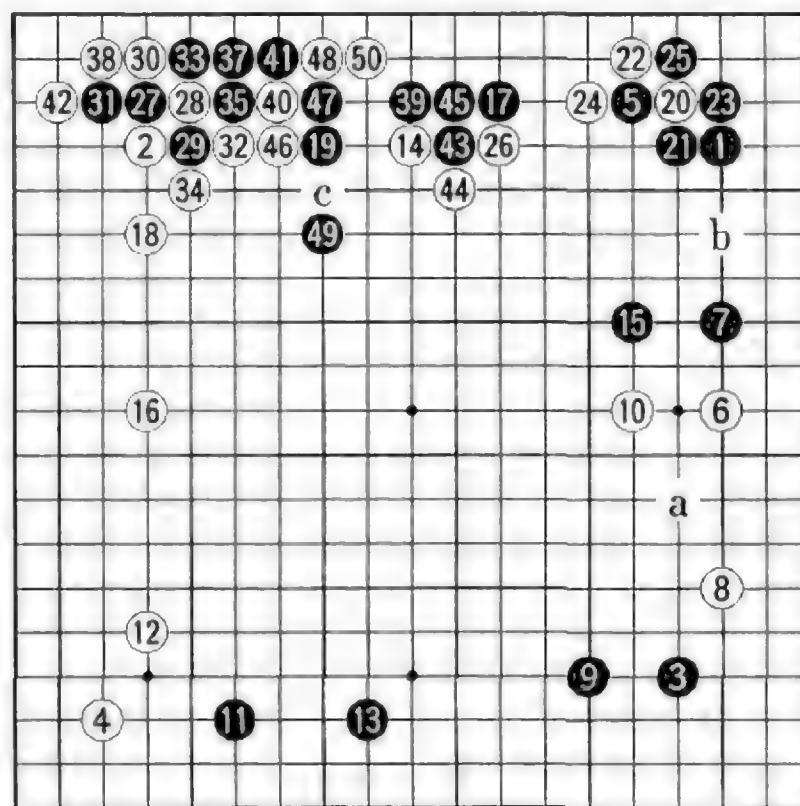
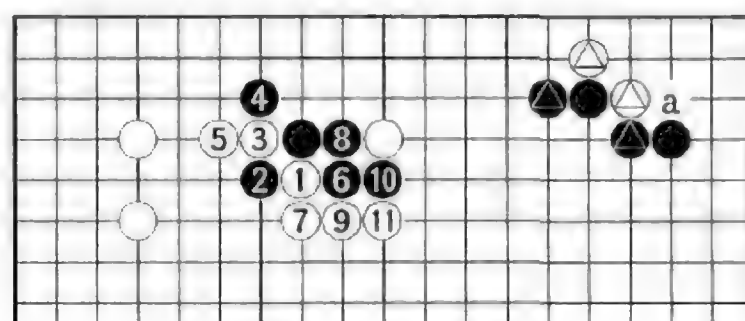


Figure 1 (1-50)
36: connects



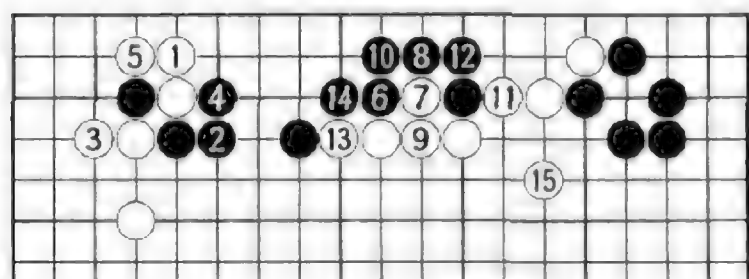
Dia. 1

Figure 1 (1-50). *Probing the opponent's defenses*

With 10, the solid move is 'a', but I chose 10 because I wanted to make the invasion at 'b' severe. Black played solidly with 15 and 17 while I built up a moyo from 14 to 18. If I were Black, I would have played 17 at 35.

Black 19 started the middle game. White 20

and 22 were a probe. If Black had played 23 at 24, I would have played the sequence in *Dia. 1*, sacrificing the stone on the side. This would make the marked exchange kikashi (forcing) for White, leaving a big endgame move at 'a'. Since Black took the corner with 23 and 25, I made shape on the side with 26.



Dia. 2

With 27 and 29, Black played for sabaki. White 30 was too aggressive. The correct move was White 1 in *Dia. 2*. Black would force with 2 and 4 and connect underneath with 6, but I would get good shape up to 15.

Black 39 was to defend against White 40. After 41, 46 and 47 were miai. White 42 was necessary to capture the corner.

Black 43 was the key point. White 48 was a probe, hoping for Black 50, White 'c'. Black countered with 49, throwing away four stones.

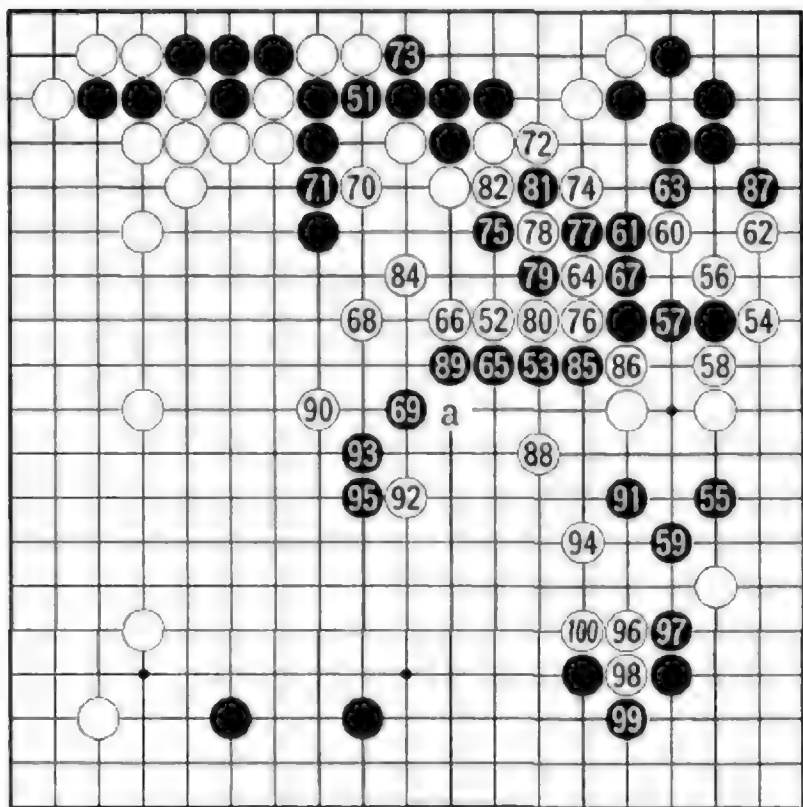


Figure 2 (51-100)

83: connects

Figure 2 (51-100). Black ahead

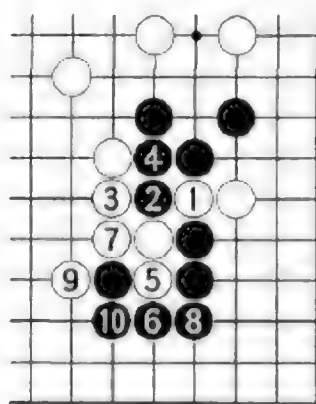
White 54 was an overplay. I should have played White 'a', Black 88, White 59. Black 55 was severe and the furikawari (trade) to 63 gave Black a definite lead.

Black 75 was a nasty peep: I could find no

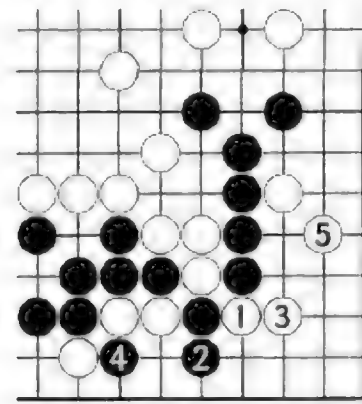
way to capture this stone. After 76, the sequence to 86 was forced.

Black should have played 87 at 88. Black 91 at 92 would have been safer.

White 98 was a mistake. I should have pushed through at 1 in *Dia. 3*. This would have given me better shape on the outside and a squeeze later on the right side.



Dia. 3



Dia. 4

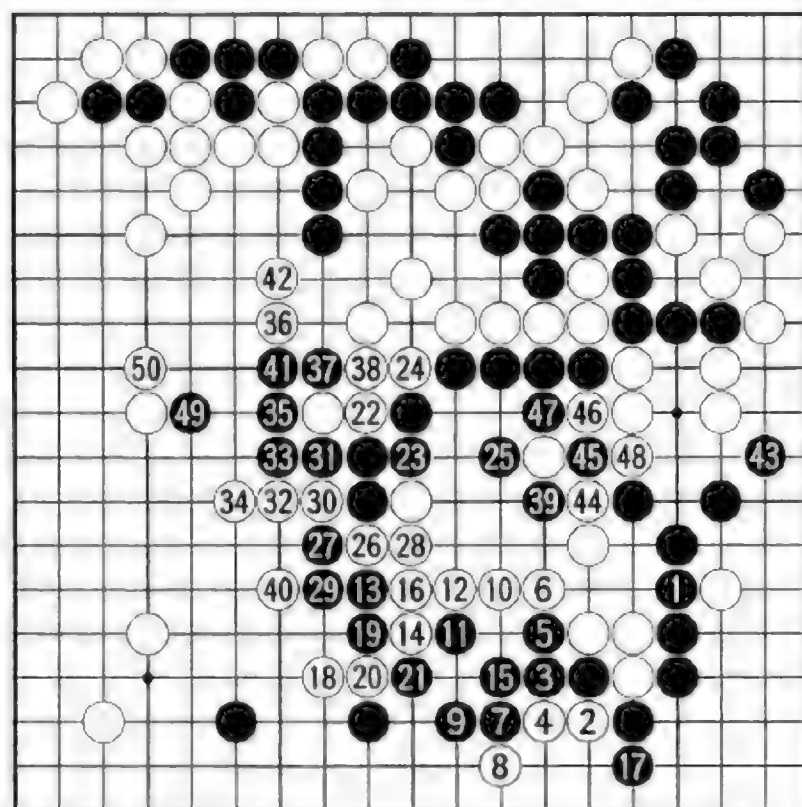


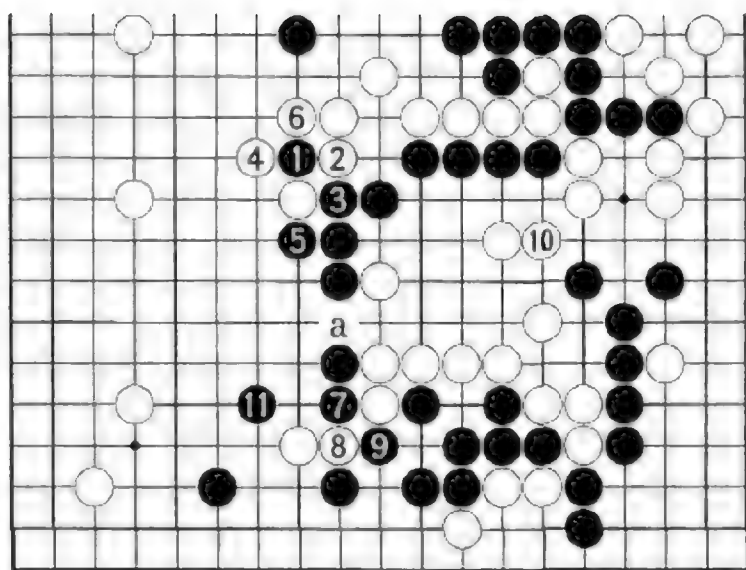
Figure 3 (101-150)

Figure 3 (101-150). Black misses his chance.

I had to start a fight, so I cut at 2. After Black 9 I could have lived in the corner as in *Dia. 4*, but my right-side group was too weak for me to do that yet. I extended my liberties with 10 to 16. Black took the corner with 17.

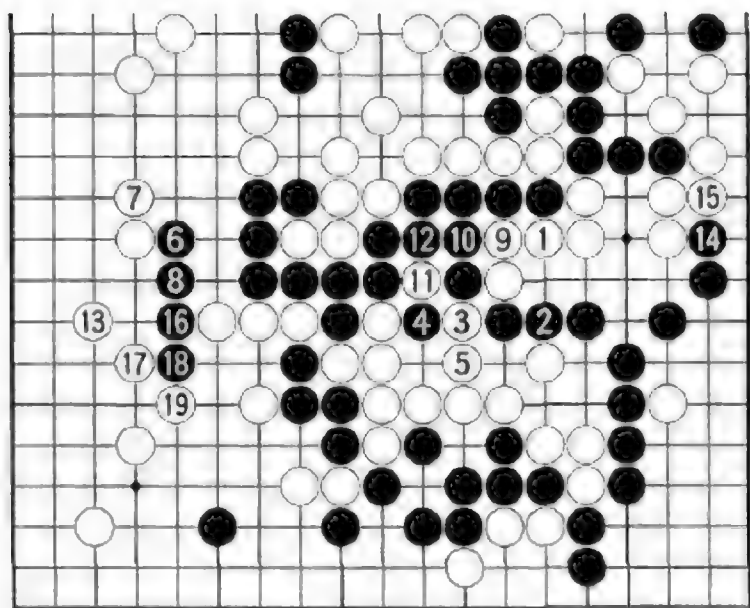
With 19 Black missed a winning chance. He should have attached at 1 in *Dia. 5* (next page), threatening White's upper-side group and forcing up to 6. Then he would have been able to play 7 and 9 without being cut by White 'a'. Next, 10 and 11 would have been miai, giving Black an easy win.

I played 22 and 24 to set up the cut at 26. My success in cutting here turned the game in my favor.



Dia. 5

Black 43. Black 44 would have been the safe move, but as he was behind, Black played aggressively. I missed a chance with 44. I should have cut with 1 and 3 in *Dia. 6*. I would have won the ensuing semeai by one move.



Dia. 6

Figure 4 (151–200). *A narrow lead*

I made life on the side with 52 and took a big yose at 54. At this point I secured a territorial lead. I should have played 60 at 62. Then I would have been able to answer Black 61 with White 68, Black 69, White 63, making a big territory in the lower left. Black pushed into my territory with 61 to 67 and my lead became a small one.

Black 95 threatened 2 to 7 in *Dia. 7*, which would have started a dangerous ko for White. Without the 1–2 exchange, I could live with White 8 at 'a'.

Figure 5 (201–264). *Hanging on to my lead*

Black eventually ran out of ko threats and captured three stones with 21. I was sure of my win when I connected at 22.

White wins by 2 1/2 points.

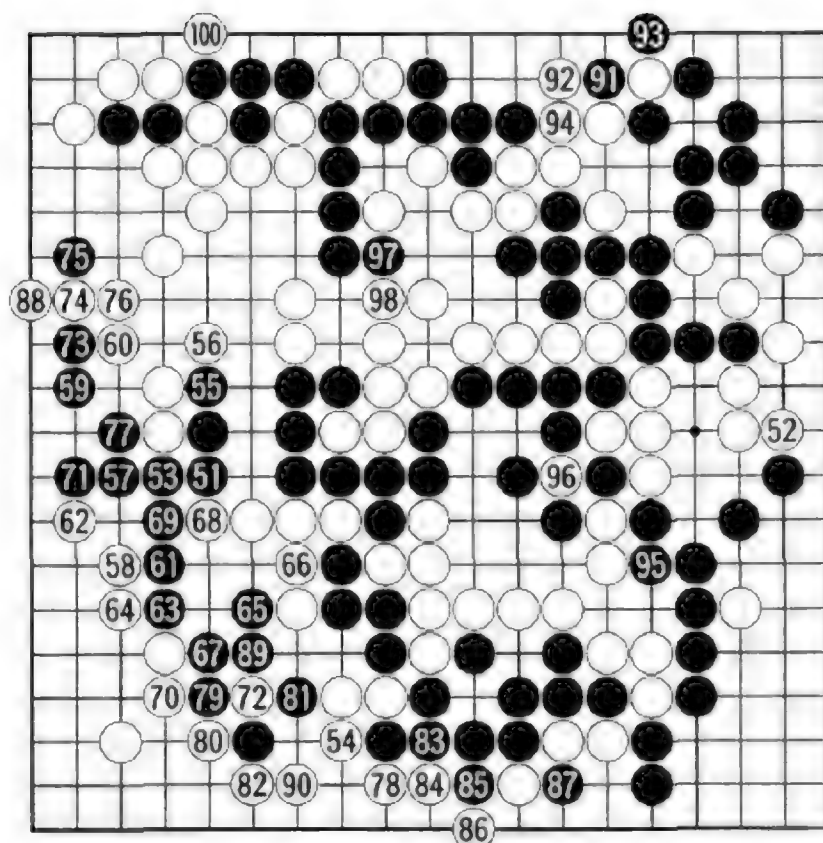


Figure 4 (151–200)

99: ko

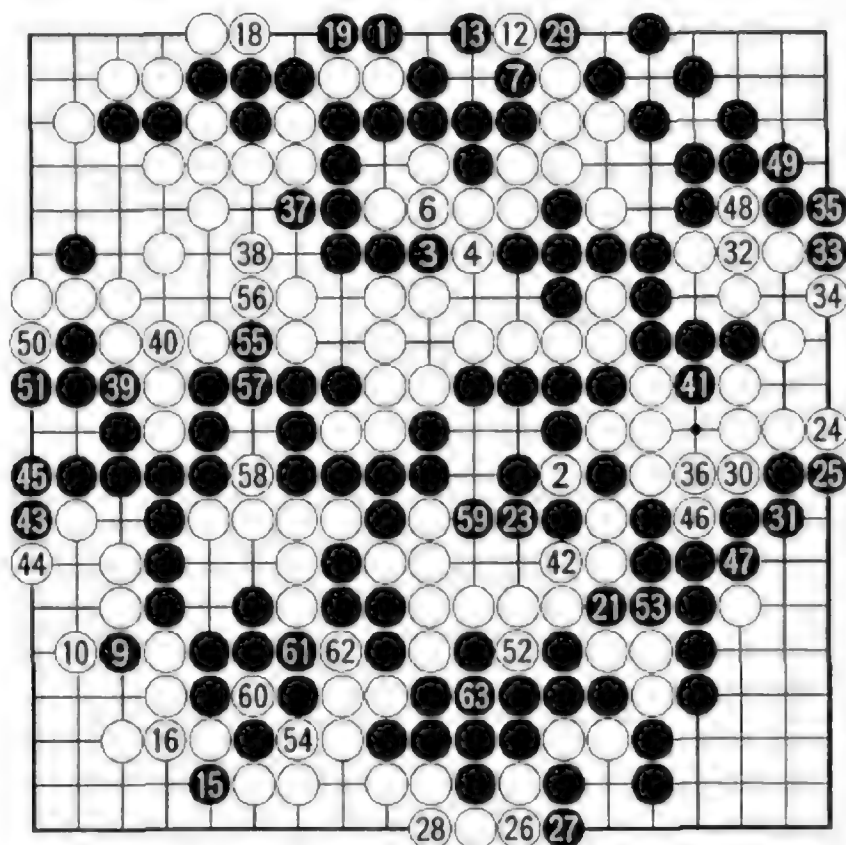
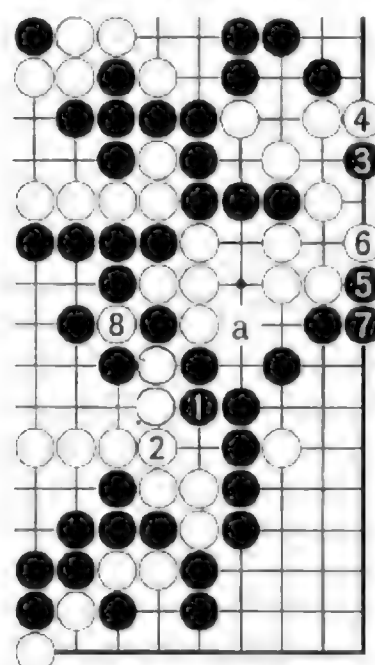


Figure 5 (201–264)

ko: 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20; 22: connects (right of 2); 64: connects the ko



Dia. 7

1st IBM Haya-go Open Tournament

This tournament, sponsored by IBM Japan, is the second major international tournament to make its appearance this year. It differs from the Fujitsu Cup and the upcoming Ing Cup and the various international team matches in its short time allowance of one hour per player, followed by 30-second byo-yomi, which by traditional standards qualifies it as *haya-go* or *quick go*. The time allowance is comparable to a TV tournament.

In the number of participants, the IBM tournament is the largest of the three new international tournaments. 64 players started out in the main tournament, but there were two preliminary stages of two rounds each preceding it. The first stage was open to professionals 4-dan and under and they were joined by two Japanese amateurs and one European and one United States player. The latter were Jan Pietsch (age 19) of West Germany, who lost to Morita 4-dan in the first round, and Thomas Tu of the U.S., who lost to Okada 4-dan.

This first stage was played on 6 June. It was followed on 20 June by the second stage, in which winners from the first stage competed with non-seeded professionals 5-dan and up. The 40 survivors from the second stage won their way into the main tournament, where they joined ten seeded players from the Nihon Ki-in, ten representatives from the Kansai Ki-in, two from China and two from Korea.

The prize money is also comparable to a TV tournament: ¥3,000,000 (about \$24,000) for 1st place, ¥1,000,000 for second, and ¥300,000 for 3rd (two players). The only title-holder to enter was Takemiya Honinbo, but there were some other notable figures among the seeded players, for example, Fujisawa Shuko, Otake and Ishida Yoshio.

So far the quarter-finals have been completed and, like the Fujitsu Cup, the tournament has been a triumph for the Nihon Ki-in, which has Takemiya, O Rissei and Ishida Yoshio in the semifinals. Completing the final four is Oyama 9-dan of the Kansai Ki-in. Below are some of the interesting results in the main tournament.

First round. Kataoka 8-dan beat Otake, Kudo 9-dan beat Yang Hui 7-dan (one of the top three Chinese women players).

Third round. Takagi 9-dan beat Chen Linxin

8-dan of China, Ishida Yoshio beat Fujisawa Shuko.

Quarter-finals. Takemiya beat Takagi, O Rissei beat Ogata 6-dan, Oyama beat Hidaka, Ishida beat Suh 8-dan of Korea.

Below we present one game from this tournament. It is of particular interest because it features a 12-year-old prodigy from Korea who is hailed as a future champion.

White: Lee 2-dan (Korea)

Black: Komatsu Hideki 6-dan

Main Tournament, Round Two. Played on 20 June 1988.

Lee is a live-in disciple of Cho Hun-hyun 9-dan, the top Korean player. In the first round he defeated Suzuki Masaharu 6-dan. Komatsu Hideki 6-dan (age 21) is perhaps the top young player after Yoda at the Nihon Ki-in.

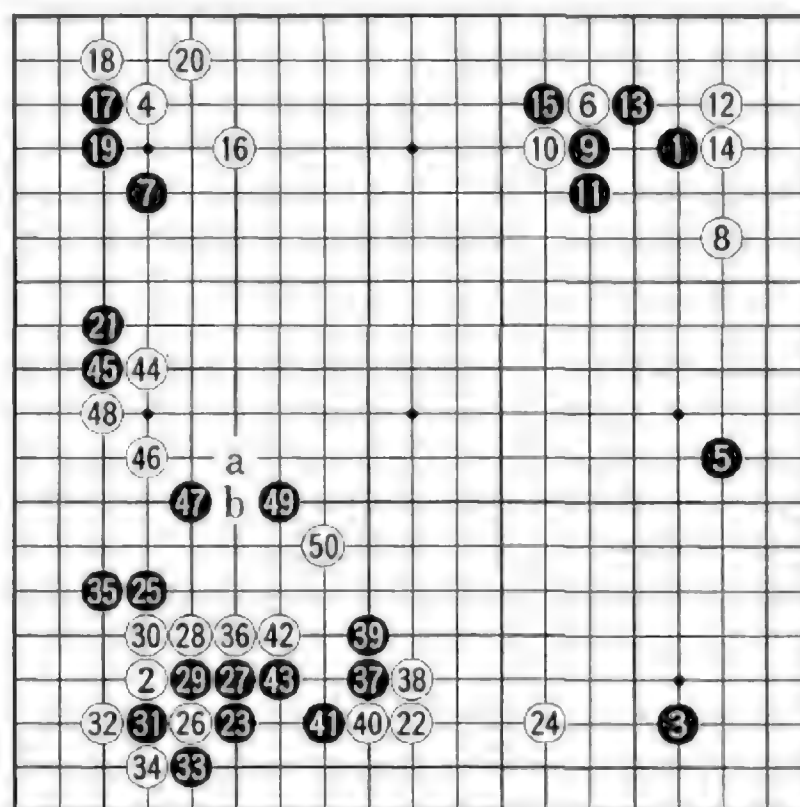


Figure 1 (1-50)

Figure 1 (1-50)

The exchange of 42 for 43 is Lee's first dubious move. Strengthening Black like this reduces the importance of the ko at 31. White should either hane at 43 with 42 or take the ko as a probe to see what Black does.

White 44 expands the scale of the fight.

Perhaps White should exchange 'a' for Black 'b' before playing 50. When Black peeps at 51 in Figure 2, he takes the initiative in the centre.

Figure 2 (51-100)

Black is satisfied with the result to 65, in

which he solidifies his position.

White 66. Komatsu commented that he would have disliked White 68, Black 69, White 'a'. Black 67 is a severe move; in the ensuing fight, Black gets to make effective use of his overall thickness.

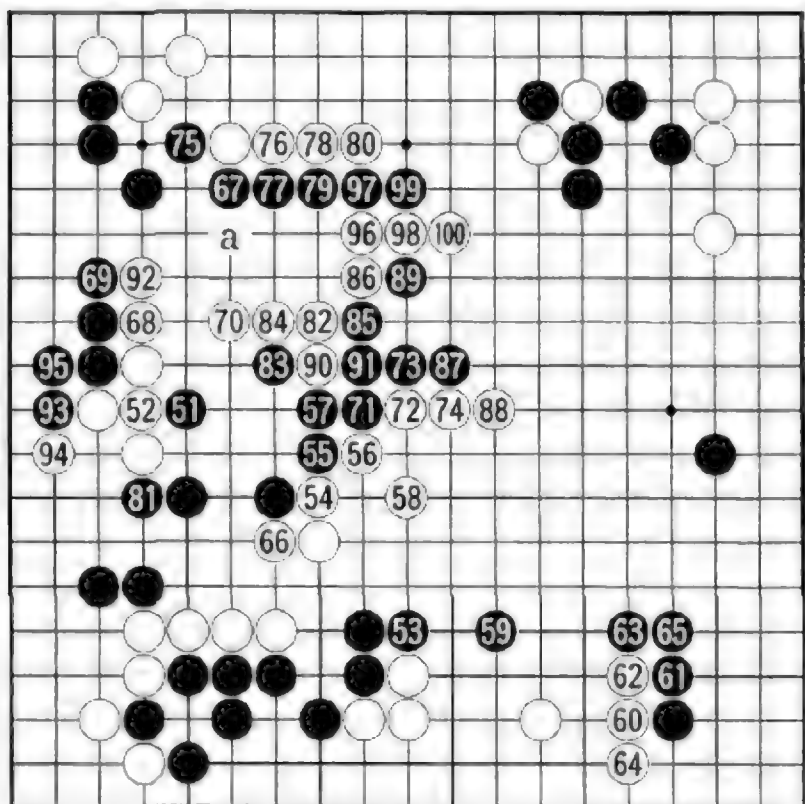


Figure 2 (51-100)

Figure 3 (101-149)

Black has taken the lead in territory. The finishing blow is Black 37. According to Ishida Akira 9-dan, however, this might be an overplay. White's last chance is to counterattack with 46 at 'a'. If Black's resists, a trade would probably fol-

low, with White sacrificing the top left and taking the top right. This might throw the issue into doubt.

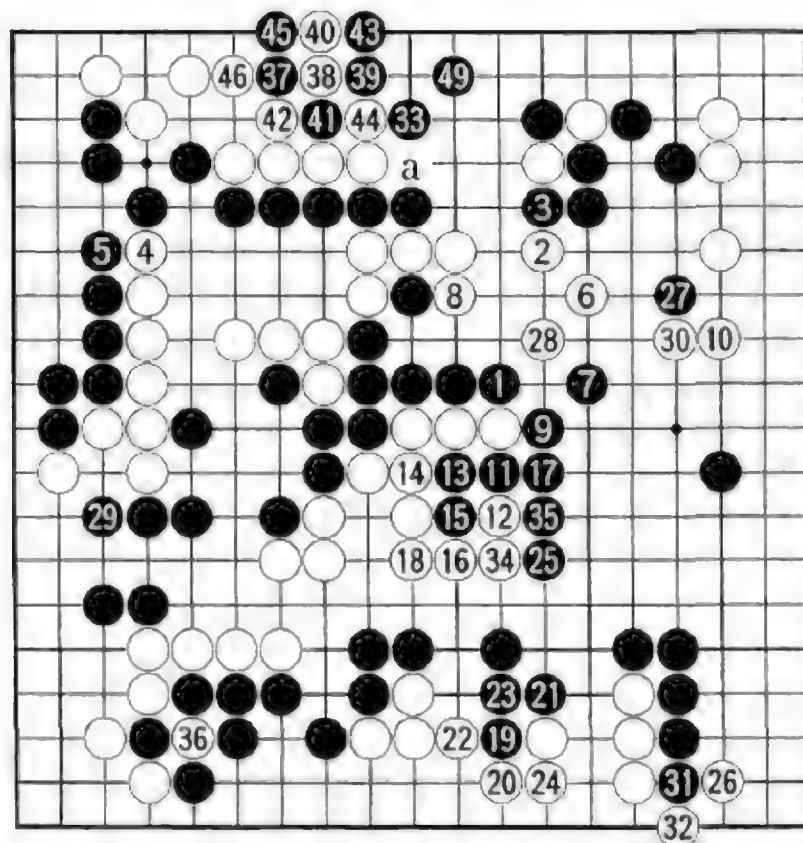


Figure 3 (101-149)

47: takes two stones; 48: retakes

The game is all over when Black reinforces with 49.

Lee may have lost the game, but his performance in the IBM tournament was quite respectable for a 12-year-old. We can expect to see a lot more of him in the future.

Moves after 149 omitted. White resigns.

Yoda Triumphs in Japan-China Super Go

China has received what must be her greatest shock to date in the four Super Go series that it has played with Japan. China is reeling on the verge of defeat after the first player for Japan, Yoda Norimoto 7-dan, defeated six of the seven players on her team. Six wins in a row in the Super Go is not unprecedented, but when Kobayashi Koichi did it in the first series in 1985 it only gave Japan a two-win lead. This time almost the whole Chinese team has been demolished before they have put one point on the board. Once again the Chinese will have to look to their captain, the 'iron goalkeeper' Nie, for another miraculous recovery, but this time there will be more pressure on him than ever before.

This is the major achievement of Yoda's career to date, far surpassing his feat in winning a place in the Meijin league at the age of 18. It is

only appropriate that it comes from a player who commented in an interview last year that he thought it was time Japanese players started taking international matches as seriously as the local title matches. He has certainly shown the way. His record to date follows.

1. (27 March, Beijing). Yoda beat Yu Bin 7-dan.
2. (29 March, Beijing). Yoda beat Chen Linxin 7-dan.
3. (27 May, Hakodate). Yoda beat Wang Qun 8-dan.
4. (29 May, Hakodate). Yoda beat Liu Xiaoguang 8-dan.
5. (7 July, Amoy). Yoda beat Jiang Zhujiu 9-dan.
6. (9 July, Amoy). Yoda beat Ma Xiaochun 9-dan.

Below, with brief comments, we present his game against Ma.

White: Ma Xiaochun 9-dan (age 23)
 Black: Yoda Norimoto 7-dan (age 22)

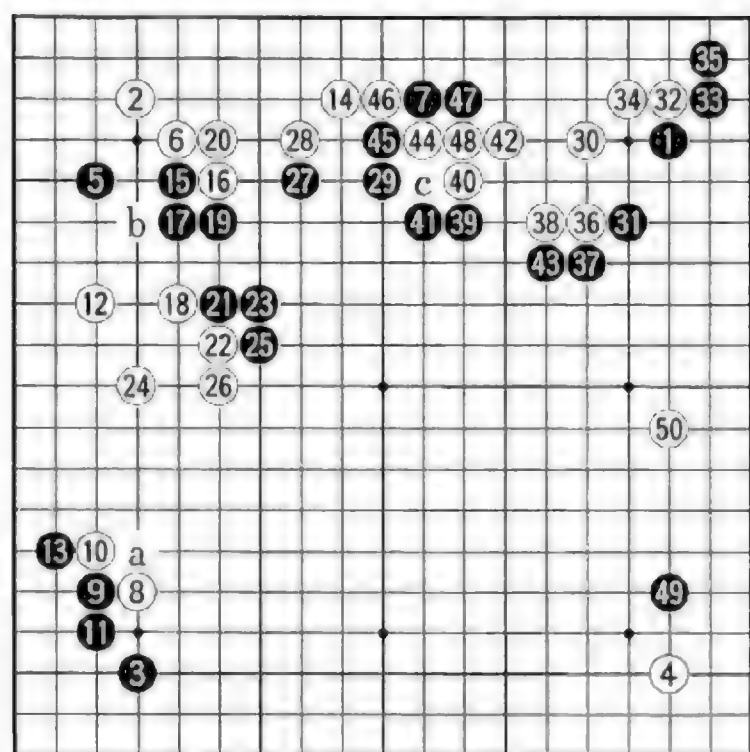


Figure 1 (1-50)

Figure 1 (1-50)

Nie queried White 12. The usual move of 'a' is better; after Black 13, White 8 and 10 would be better unplayed.

White 14. Ma avoids the usual move of 'b'. Instead of jumping to 'c' next, Yoda plays aggressively with 15. Throughout this game he goes for thickness, playing on the outside.

Awaji was astonished by Yoda's boldness with Black 43. He expected Black 46. Awaji accompanied Yoda on this trip to China, as he also did in March, to be ready to play if Yoda lost in the first of the two games scheduled to be played. He made himself useful by saving Yoda, a non-swimmer, from drowning in the hotel pool the day before the fifth game.

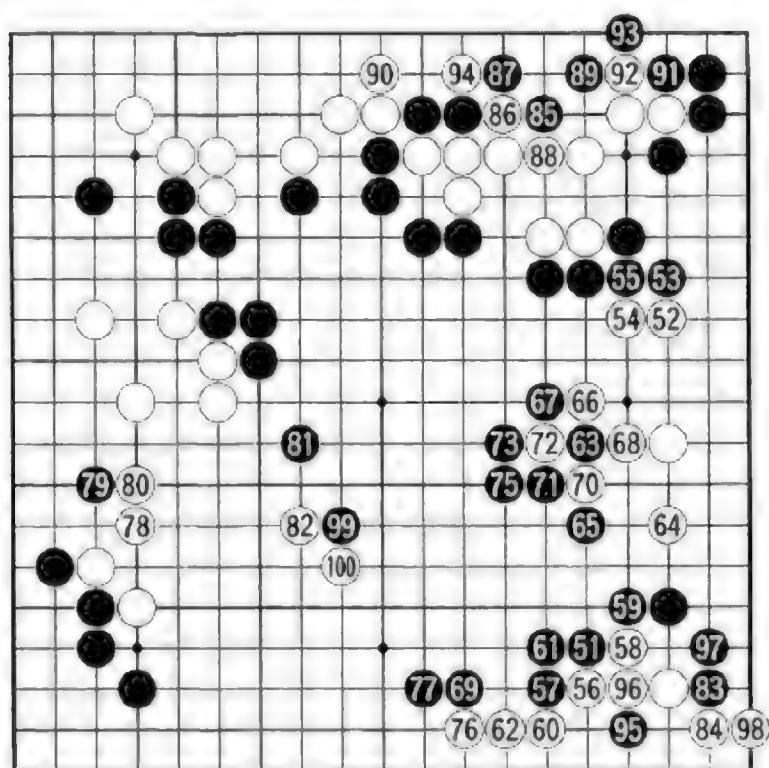


Figure 2 (51-100)

74: connects

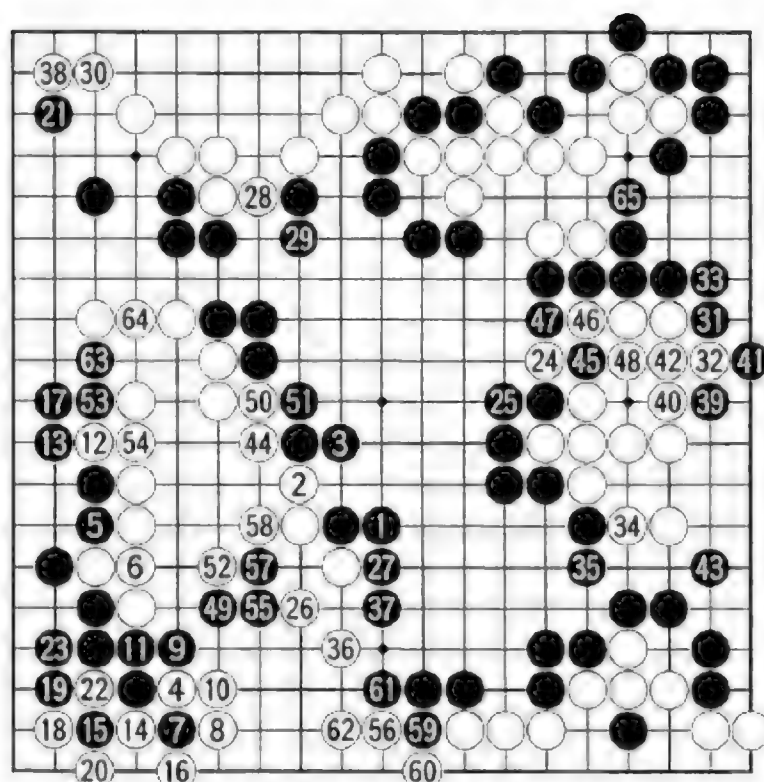


Figure 3 (101-165)

Figure 2 (51-100).

Yoda's policy from 65 to 75 is consistent, but Awaji was worried that he was not taking enough territory.

Figure 3 (101-165). White 26. Ma is ahead.

Figure 4 (166-237)

White 78 should be at 79. White 80 should be at 81. Ma was playing slackly, apparently confident that he was comfortably ahead. With these two moves his lead was upset.

The Chinese game recorder announced the result in Japanese as a half-point win and the players accepted this, so it is the official result, but actually Yoda won by one and a half points. The recorder made a mistake in converting the Chinese result to the Japanese system.

Dame moves after 237 omitted.

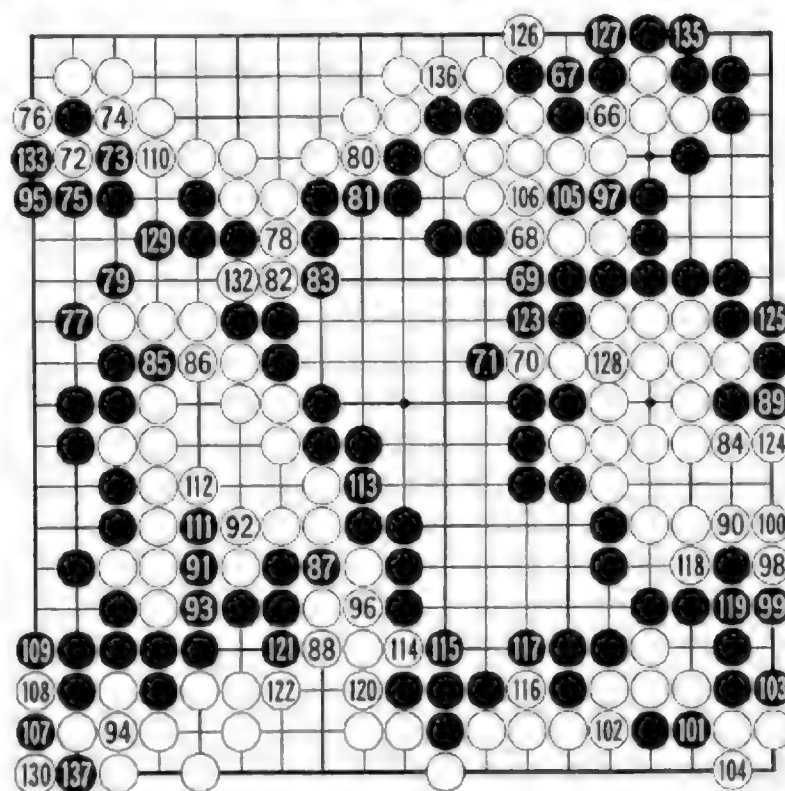


Figure 4 (166-237)

131: connects (at 108); 134: right of 76

12th Kisei Title

The 1988 tournament year got off to a surprising start with Kobayashi Koichi's crushing rebuff of Kato's challenge for the 12th Kisei title. The contrast to last year could not have been greater: in 1987 it seemed that Kato could do nothing wrong, but this year it seems that he can do nothing right. He has always been very confident when facing Kobayashi, yet he was able to win only one game in the title series. That was followed by a loss to Nie Weiping in the final game of the 3rd Japan-China Super Go series, then by yet another loss to Nie in the quarter-finals of the Fujitsu World Championship. He also lost his Judan title to Cho Chikun and as we go to press has just lost the first two game of the Gosei title match to the challenger, who just happens to be Kobayashi Koichi. Kato still holds three titles (the others are the Meijin and the Oza), which is one more than anyone else, so he is no has-been, but clearly he is in a bad slump.

Of course, Kato's bad form alone doesn't account for Kobayashi's success in the Kisei title match. The latter has to be given credit for adapting his style to meet the challenge from Kato. Inside of his usual tight, territorial game, he adopted a more aggressive strategy, building thickness and emphasizing attack. To see how he did it, we would like to present Kobayashi's own commentary on the first game.

Game One

White: Kobayashi Koichi, Kisei

Black: Kato Masao, Meijin, Judan & Gosei

Komi: 5 1/2. Time: 9 hours each.

Played in Honolulu on 13, 14 January 1988.

Following the recent fashion, this game was played overseas. In 1986 the first game of the Kisei title match was played in Seoul; in 1987 it went to Los Angeles. This year it became the first Japanese title game to be played in Hawaii.

The commentary below takes the form of an interview. The reporter for *Let's Go* is Kobori Keiji, who wrote the text of *Appreciating Famous Games*. The magazine *Let's Go* is keyed to players of middle-kyu level, and the aim of their game commentaries is to explain professional games clearly and simply while also describing the decisive points of the contest. (The interview was conducted soon after the first game.)

Figure 1 (1-30). Playing with determination

LG: You had a tough time at the end of last year.

KK: After losing two games, Cho won the next three and took the Tengen title away from me. My results for last year were terrible too: 24 wins to 23 losses. This year I need something to change my luck, to help me to recover.

LG: You helped Cho to complete his grand slam, so he should at least give you a bottle of sake. As always, the new year starts with the Kisei title match. You're faced with your deadly rival, Kato Meijin. The custom of holding the first game overseas now seems well established.

KK: That's right. Hawaii was warm — it was great. I went for a swim. The pace of life there is slow and relaxed; the party the night before the game lasted four hours.

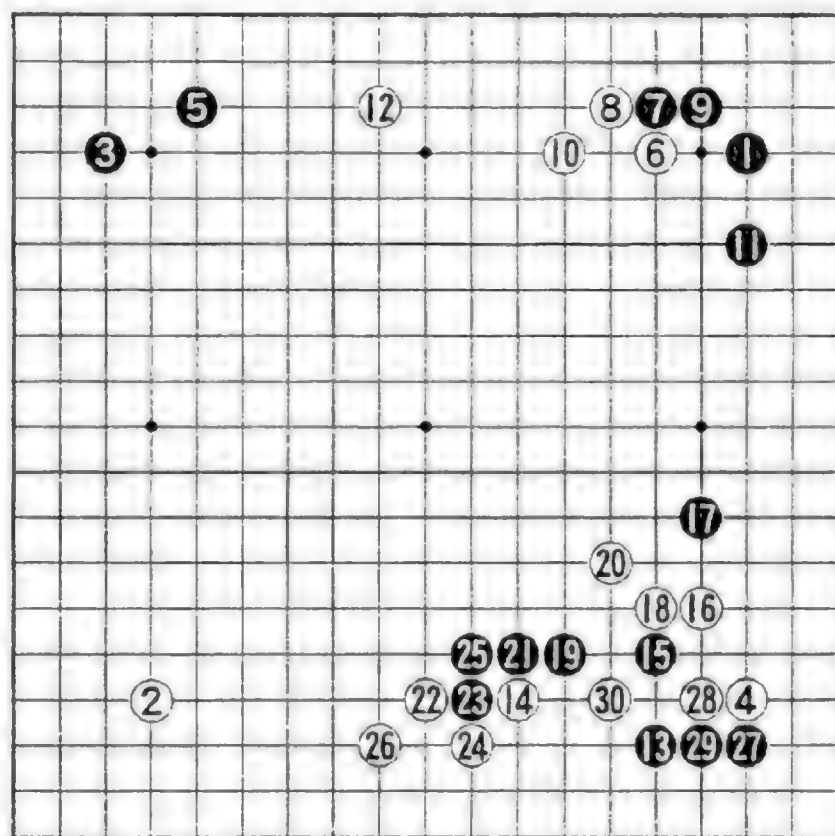
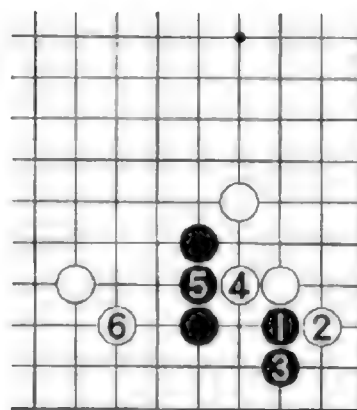
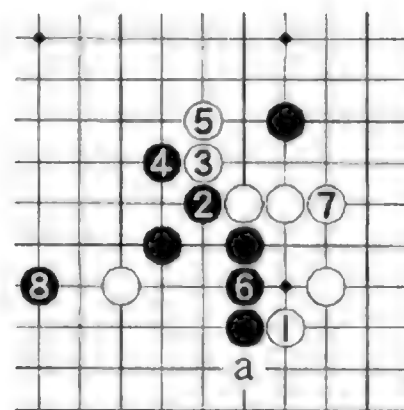


Figure 1 (1-30)



Dia. 1: new move



Dia. 2: inferior for White

LG: Well, let's have a look at the first game. The opening looks like a standard one, but a corner fight starts with 15 and 17.



The players meet some fans (?) on the beach.

KK: Attacking at 17 sets up the jump to 19. Of course, you know the joseki in *Dia. 1*. In this case, White would attack at 6.

LG: White 6? That's not in the books.

KK: That's what I intended to play. I thought the kosumi of 20 was probably best here.

LG: Why doesn't White attach at 29?

KK: That's a good question. If Black answers White 1 in *Dia. 2* by descending at 'a', then White 1 is a forcing move. But Black will counter with 2. After 8, the white stone is immobilized and that's painful.

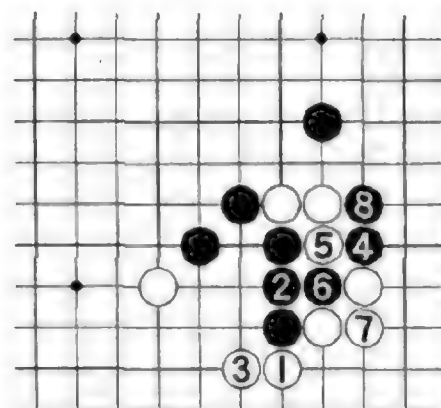
LG: White can hane at 1 in *Dia. 3*!

KK: That's bad for White. Black connects solidly at 2, then cuts across the knight's move at 4.

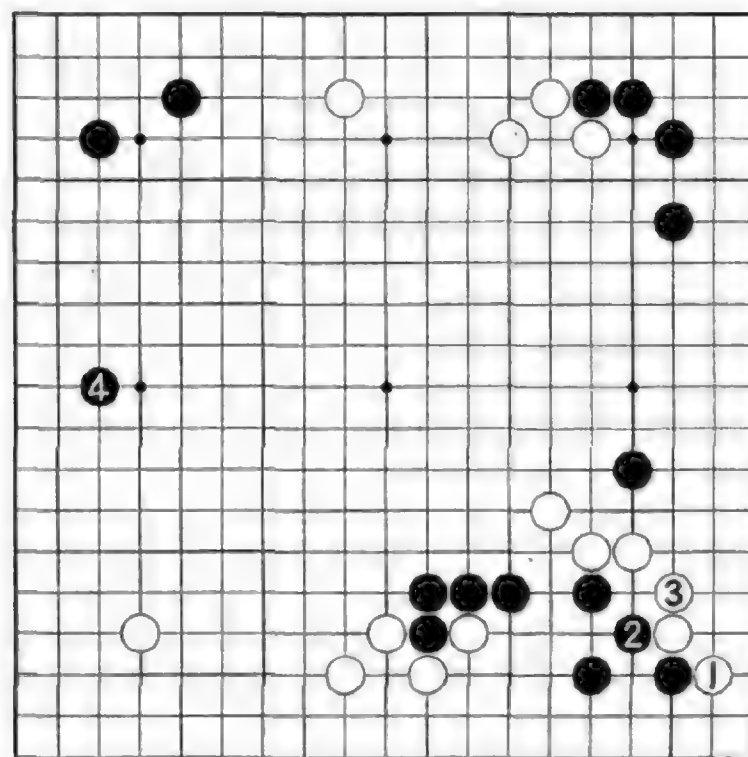
LG: To go on a bit, when Black attaches at 27, White 28 and 30 are a terrific counter. These moves created quite a stir.

KK: I suppose *Dia. 4* would be usual. Black would occupy the large point of 4. All you can say is that this would be a reasonable game. I had some doubts, but I resolutely launched a challenge with 28 and 30.

LG: That's the spirit. Manly courage is the only way to topple your nemesis.



Dia. 3: bad for White



Dia. 4: feasible

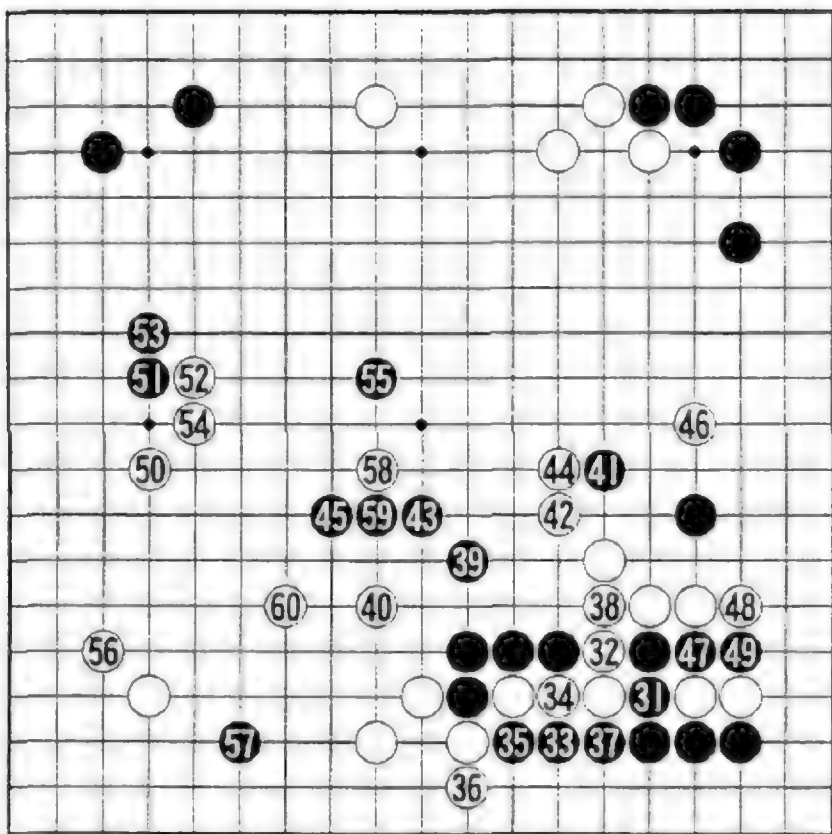
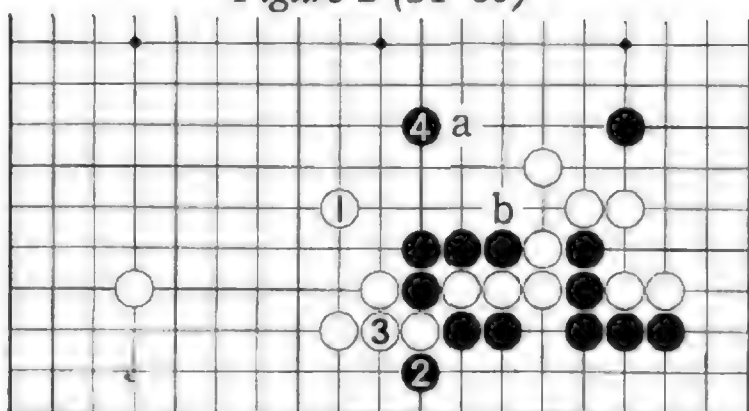


Figure 2 (31-60)



Dia. 5: White loses points

Figure 2 (31-60). White in fine fettle

LG: White cut off the four centre stones by brute force.

KK: The continuation seems to be inevitable. One thing I would like to emphasize for your readers is that White 36 is absolutely necessary. This is the only move.

LG: Is it so important?

KK: It's very important. If White is in a hurry to play 1 in *Dia. 5*, Black will hit him with the atari of 2. Next, Black 4 or 'a'? Black 'b' is sente. Black 2 by itself makes a difference of ten points — White loses five points and Black gains five. There are various other pluses for Black too — you can't afford to miss moves like this.

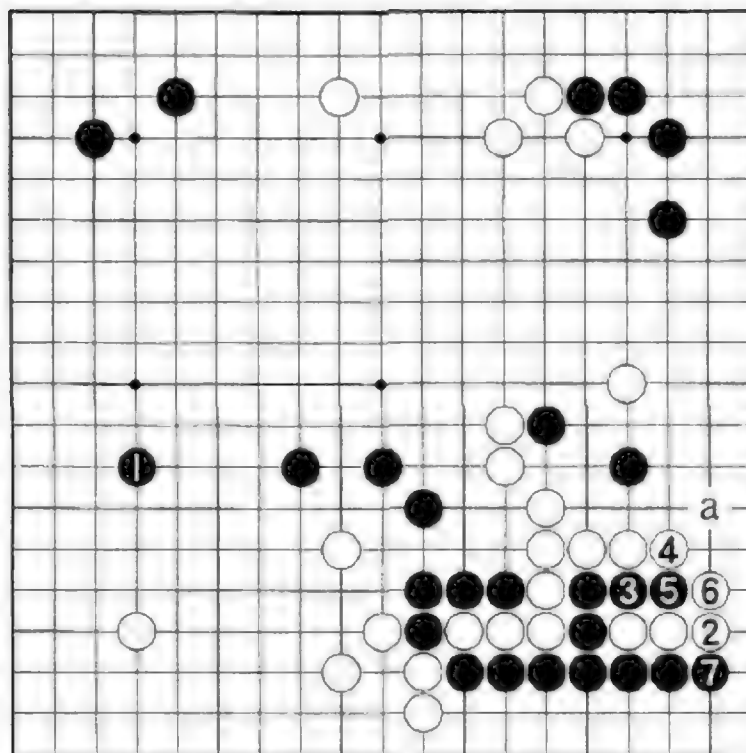
LG: The fight seems to come to a pause with 45 and 46.

KK: This is one of the problem points of the game. Kato chose to capture two stones with 47 and 49, but . . .

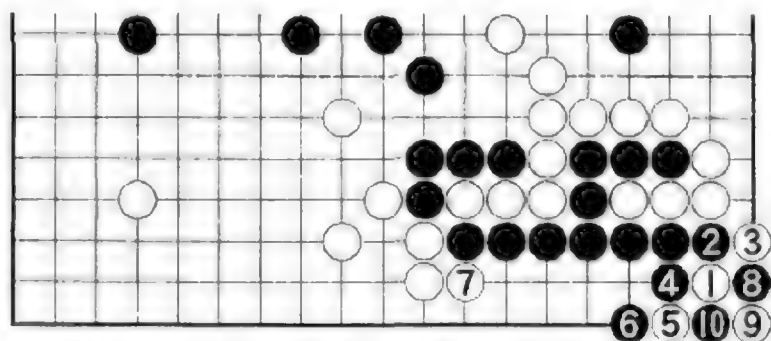
LG: Is this so big?

KK: It's a very subtle point. After the game Kato suggested Black 1 in *Dia. 6*.

LG: That makes a big difference compared to White 50.



Dia. 6: taking the large point first



Dia. 7: ko

KK: But White 2 will be sente. Black pushes down with 3 and 5, but then he has to block with 7. Needless to say, he plays 3 and 5 to create the threat of 'a'. The chances are that Black will patiently defend like this.

LG: If he doesn't play 7?

KK: White can get the approach-move ko in *Dia. 7*. My feeling is that Black had no choice but to play 47 and 49. This is the fighting approach, I think.

LG: But the majority opinion was that White had a promising game when he switched to 50.

KK: That's what we players thought too. Judging from the result, perhaps playing strongly with 28 and 30 in Figure 1 was a good strategy.

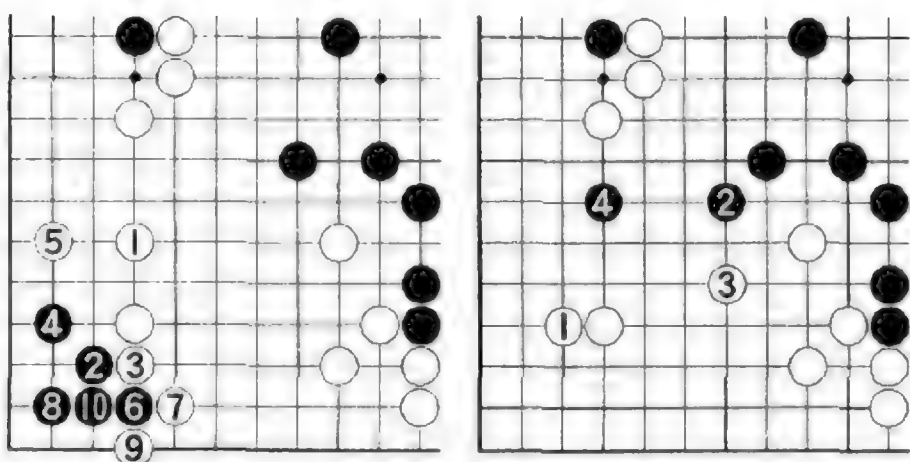
LG: You're supposed to be fond of territory, yet you're giving it to the opponent. It's the reverse of your usual style.

KK: (laughs). I have to show that I have more than one string to my bow.

LG: That's the only way to beat Kato. Would you mind explaining simply the sequence from 56 to 60?

KK: Let's see. Well, in this position White 56 is a well-balanced defensive move. Worst would be 1 in *Dia. 8*, because Black lives easily with 2 etc.

LG: White 1 doesn't take the actual position into account.



Dia. 8: worst

Dia. 9: second-best

KK: The iron pillar of 1 in Dia. 9 is probably the second-best move. Black 2 and 4 are nasty.

LG: Kato plunged in deep with 57. He's no slouch.

KK: If Black plays 1 and 3 in *Dia. 10* after 56, White stops him in his tracks with 2 and 4.

LG: Ah, that's the difference from Dia. 9.

KK: How would you answer Black 57?

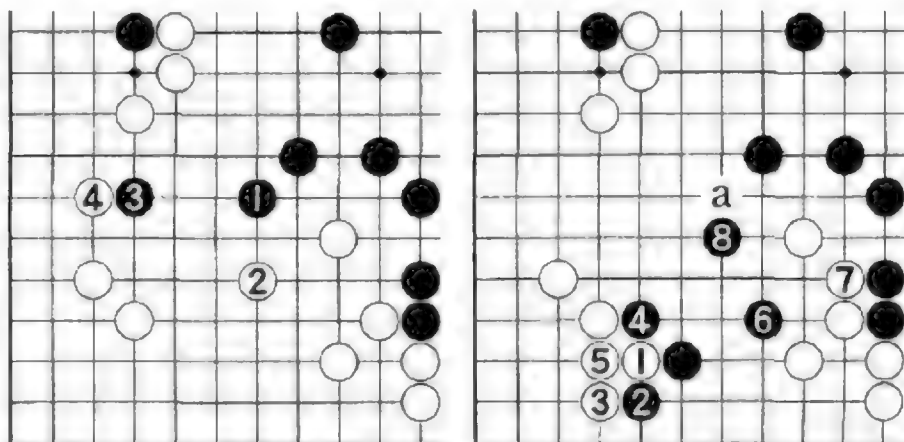
LG: I'd want to defend the corner.

KK: Do you mean attacking at 1 in *Dia. 11*? This will be terrible for White when Black attacks with 6 and 8. Even if White continues with 'a', both White and Black will probably live.

LG: That's why you emphasized attacking in the centre with White 58 and 60. Peeping with 58 before playing 60 appears to be the correct order

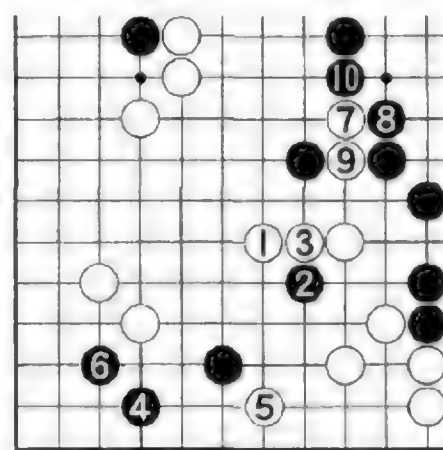
of moves.

KK: Not 'appears to be' but 'is'. If White simply jumps to 1 in *Dia. 12* and the same moves as in the game follow, then when he peeps at 7 Black will dodge to the side. White won't be able to mount an effective attack.



Dia. 10: just right

Dia. 11: territory destroyed



Dia. 12: changing the timing



Relaxing before the game: Cho (the Yomiuri commentator), Kobayashi, Kato, Rin (the referee)

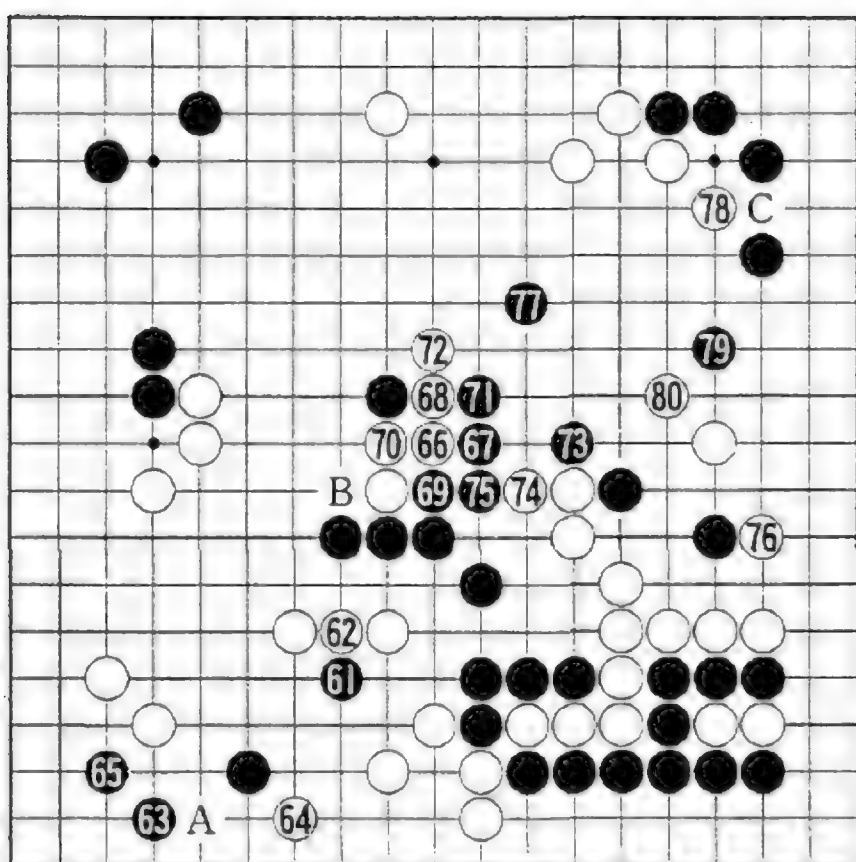
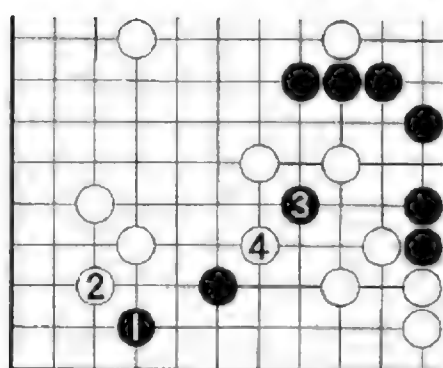
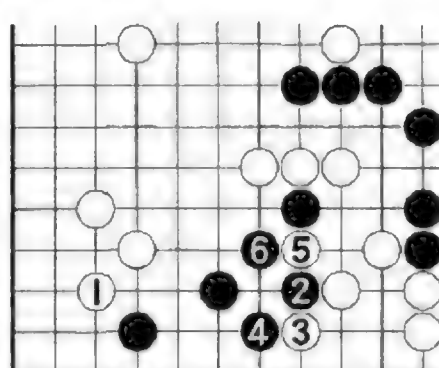


Figure 3 (61-80)



Dia. 13: timing



Dia. 14: bad for White

Figure 3 (61-80). Missing an easy win

LG: Could you explain 61 to 65 simply?

KK: Black 61 is a good peep. Now is the right time to peep. If Black peeps after running into the corner with 1 in *Dia. 13*, then White counters with 2 and 4 and Black will have trouble living. If the 1-2 exchange hasn't been made and White plays 62 in the figure at 4 in the diagram, then Black will switch to 2 in the corner, making a trade.

LG: I see. It's logical.

KK: It doesn't call for admiration. It's one of the basics of go.

LG: What if White answers Black 63 at 65?

KK: White 1 in *Dia. 14*? Black will attach at 2; this will be a tough ko for White. In this game he can't fight a ko.

LG: So you let Black live with 65.

KK: White can aim at A later.

LG: After making this exchange, you finally switched to attack in the centre with 66. What's the position at this stage?

KK: I thought that since Figure 2 White had maintained a lead. But I made an awful move at a crucial point of the game. I tried for too much

with 70 — it's a very bad move.

LG: That was the comment in *Go Weekly*. Before that, couldn't Black turn at B instead of 67?

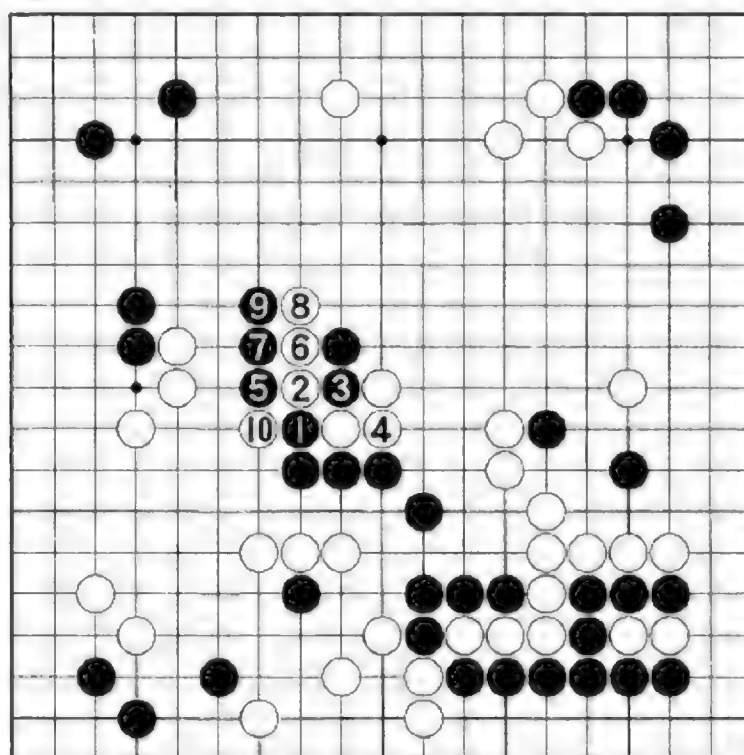
KK: Have you studied it?

LG: I tried playing it out. If I were playing black, I'd probably turn at B.

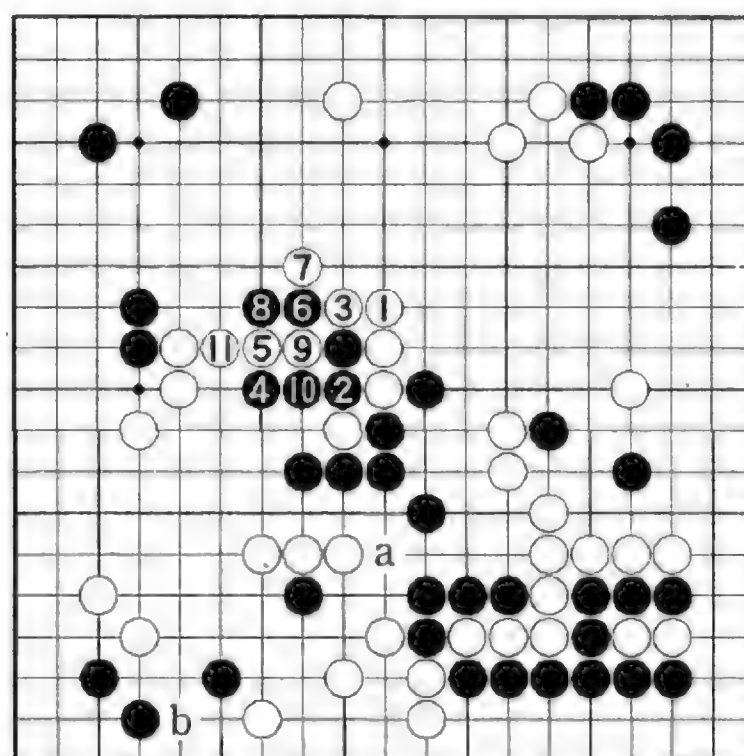
KK: That's very sharp — you thought of the same thing as the players.

LG: Anyone can think of a move.

KK: At any rate, it's a move you have to consider. The sequence in *Dia. 15* would follow. A furious fight would follow White 10. It will get complicated, but I think that White can handle the fight.



Dia. 15: a furious fight



Dia. 16: extending is the only move

LG: Well, why is connecting at 70 wrong? I think that it's a severe move that takes away Black's eye shape.

KK: The most aggressive move is not always the best one. I played it impulsively, without

thinking much about it, but if I had extended at 1 in *Dia. 16*, I would have had a definite lead. The moves to 11 are pretty likely. The large black group can live with 'a', but if White starts attacking with 'b', keeping sente all the way, there would have been nothing difficult about the game.

LG: In other words, you missed the simplest variation.

KK: This completely messed up my lead. For Black 79, connecting at C would probably have been better. That way, if Black saved his group in the centre, the game might even have been more promising for him than for White.

LG: An incredible trade followed in the game.

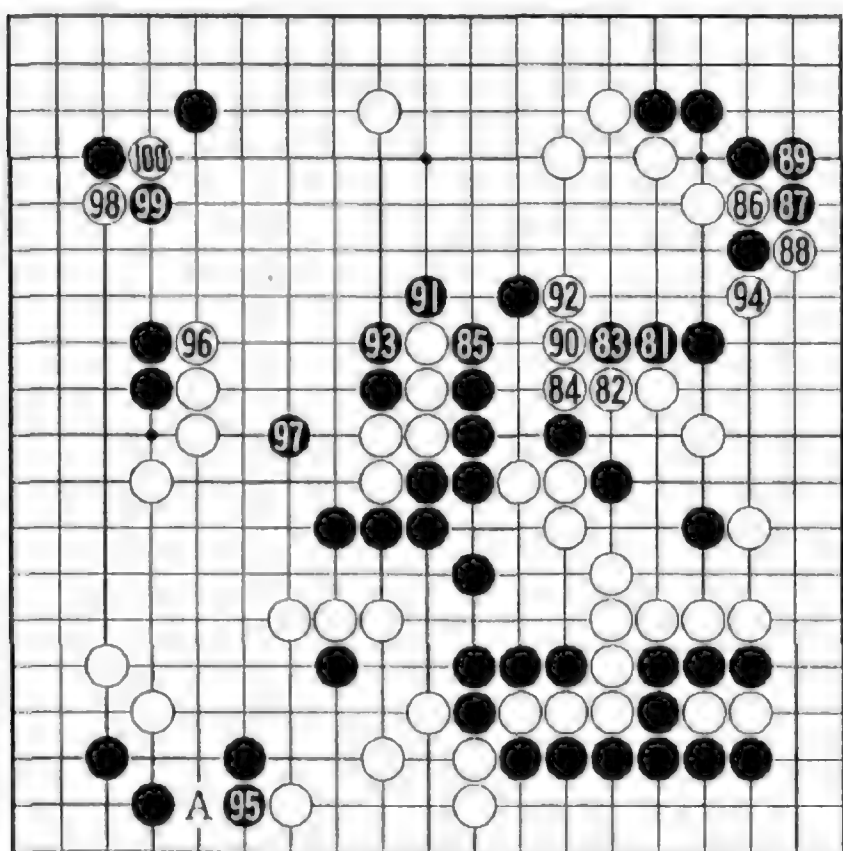
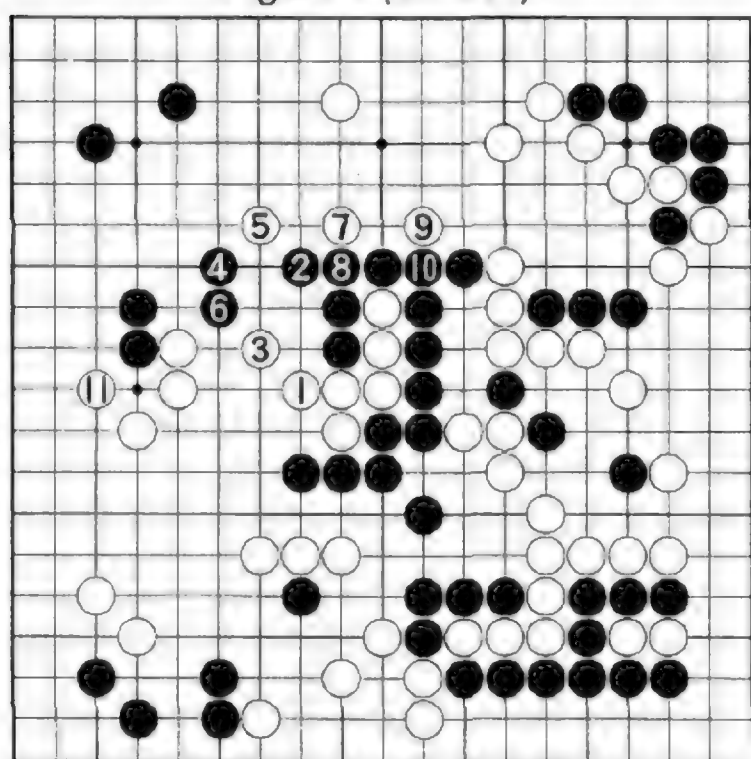


Figure 4 (81-100)



Dia. 17: better to save the group

Figure 4 (81-100). Flawed judgement

KK: Black settled his large centre group, but

when White secured the right side with 86 to 94, I thought that the game was reasonable for me. However, I then made my second dreadful move. When Black played 95 to defend against White A, pushing up at 96 was wrong. After Black captured with 97, I attacked with 98 and 100, but this was surprisingly unproductive.

LG: It becomes apparent in the next figure how little White actually gained. Does that mean that White should have used 96 to save his centre stones?

KK: That's right. White 1 in *Dia. 17*. At the time I was dissatisfied because Black 2 and 4 build a perfect barrier. That's why I attempted to force with 96. Yet *Dia. 17* would have been good enough. If you try working out the endgame after this, you find that White has quite a comfortable win.

LG: Your judgement was astray. Even the Kisei is not infallible. Straining for that little extra gain backfired on you.

KK: There was an upset here: Black took the lead.

LG: How did the game then turn into a win for White? Could you just touch on the key points?

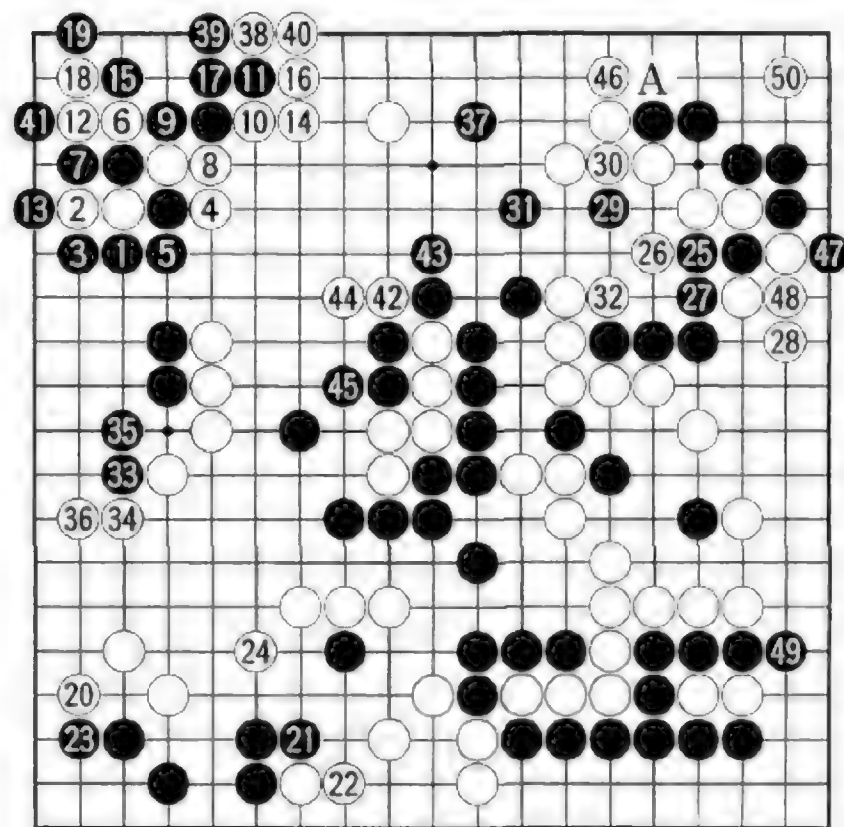
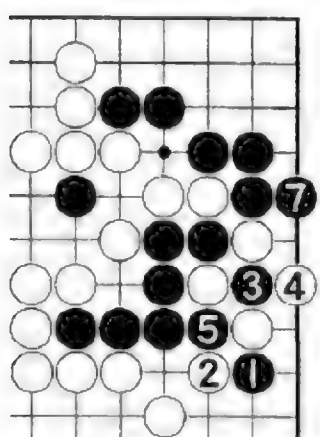


Figure 5 (101-150)

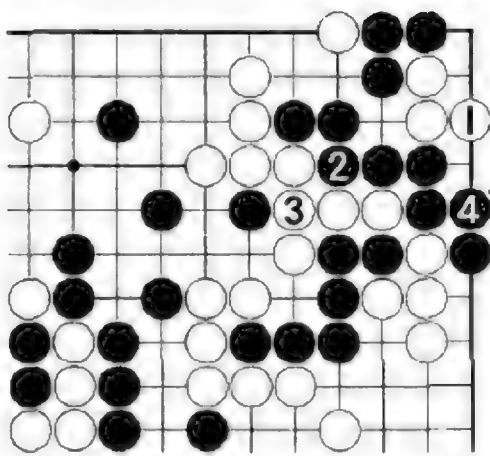
Figure 5 (101-150). An unreasonable tenuki

LG: Apparently Black 47 was a mistake.

KK: If Black is going to atari here, he must defend at A next. The reason is shown in *Dia. 18*. If Black keeps the atari in reserve, then he can play 1 to 5, making 7 sente, which helps his eye shape. White 50 works: it gets a seki.



*Dia. 18: insurance
6: connects at 3*



Dia. 19: sente seki

had played at 1 in *Dia. 19*, I would have got a sente seki. After 56, Black can tenuki. If White 'a', Black has the clever counter of 'b'; if instead White 'b', Black gets a seki with 'a'. White lost a move here.

LG: At this stage Black was still ahead, wasn't he?

KK: Black's losing move was 77. Jumping to 'c' was bigger. When I roped off the centre with 96 and 98, I was definitely ahead.

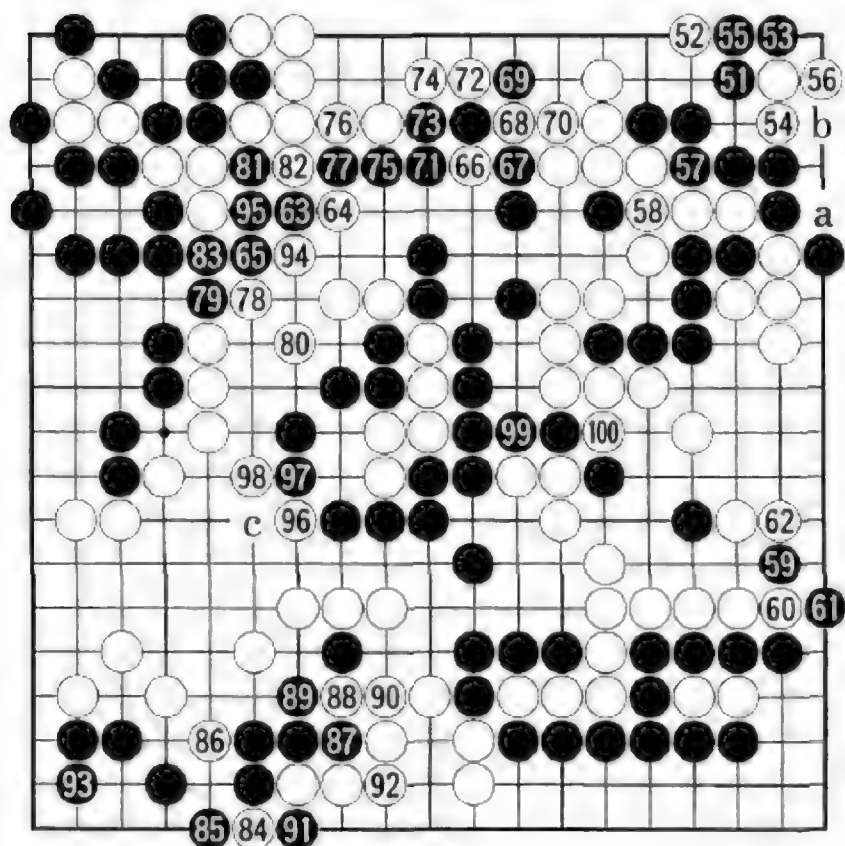


Figure 6 (151-200)

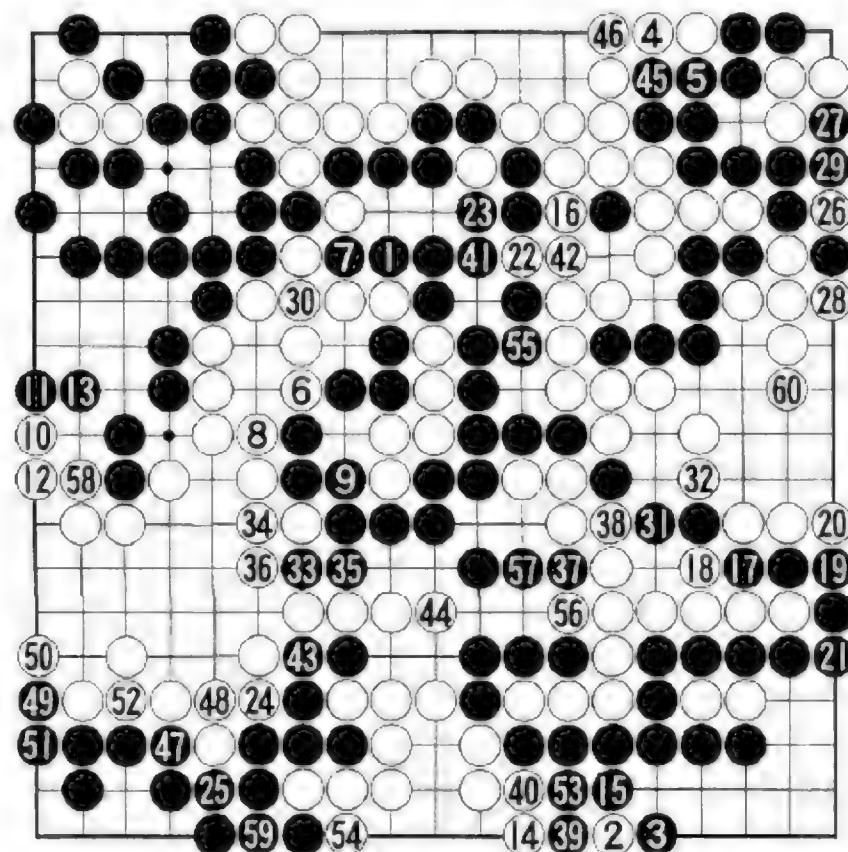


Figure 7 (201-261)

61: ko (below 26). Black connects the ko.

Figure 6 (151-200). Blunders by both

KK: White 56 is a stupid slip on my part. If I

Continued on page 37



An unusual sight: championship players in aloha shirts

The 12th Meijin Title Match

In our previous issue we presented the first game, played in New York, of this title match. In this issue, we would like to give the remaining three games, including a special analysis of the third game, which Rin forfeited by playing two moves in a row.

Going on past results between these two players, which was 38 wins for Rin to 35 wins for Kato, one would have predicted a very close contest for the Meijin title, but their record in title matches told a different story. Here Kato had a big lead, having won five of their six title matches. The only one in which Rin prevailed was the 1969 Honinbo title match, which he won 4-2. This was when Kato set a record, still unbroken, by becoming the challenger for a top title at the lowly rank of 5-dan. It was the first of his notorious eight unsuccessful title challenges in a row. He broke the drought in 1976 by winning the 1st Gosei title and immediately afterwards also won the 14th Judan, taking the latter title from Rin. Since then, he has had no trouble against Rin in title matches; with Kato now having won six out of seven, he amply qualifies as Rin's 'nemesis'. It is curious how results between two great players can be so one-sided; as the reader can see from the commentaries that follow, there is hardly any disparity in their actual skill.

Game Two

White: Kato Masao Meijin

Black: Rin Kaiho 9-dan

Played in Takarazuka City on 30 September, 1 October 1987.

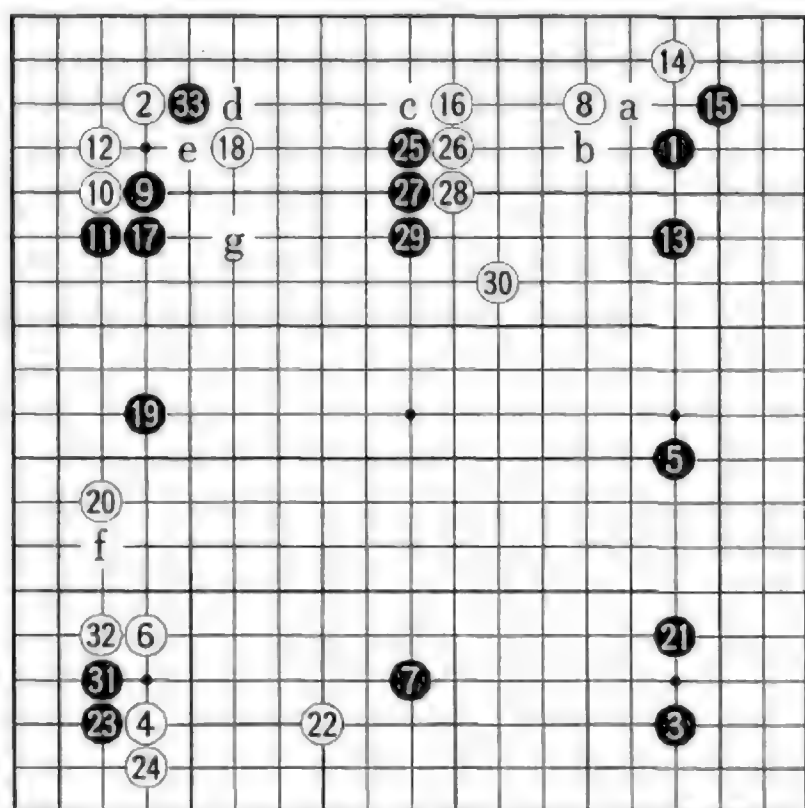


Figure 1 (1-33)

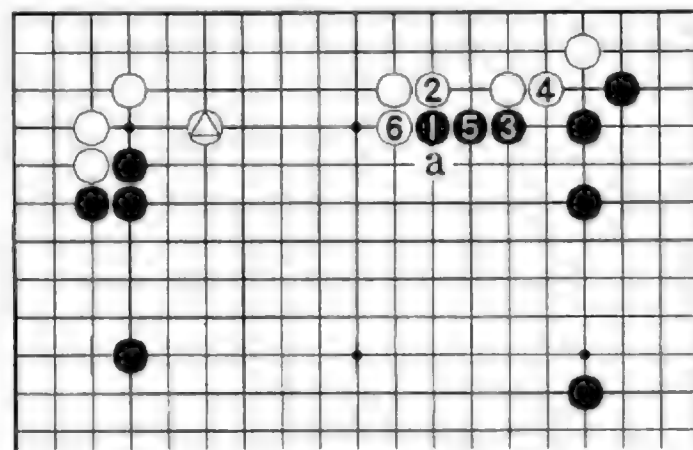
Figure 1 (1-33). Breaking the rules

White 14. If White cuts at 17, a fight will start with Black 'a', White 'b', Black 'c'.

White 18 is unusual. It clearly makes a loose shape, as Black can aim at 33, but White doesn't want to play at 'd', as that would make his overall position at the top too low. The usual alternative to 'd' is White 'e', but the gap between that and 16 would be a little too wide. White 18 strikes a balance between these two points, but the problem of whether Black will try to take advantage of its weak point becomes the focus of

the opening.

The high move of 19 keeps sente: a follow-up at 'f' would be so good for Black that White has to play 20 immediately.



corner with 1 in Dia. 2, Black plays the two-step hane of 4 and 6. The thickness he builds, in sente, up to 10 more than makes up for the damage done earlier to his right-side moyo.

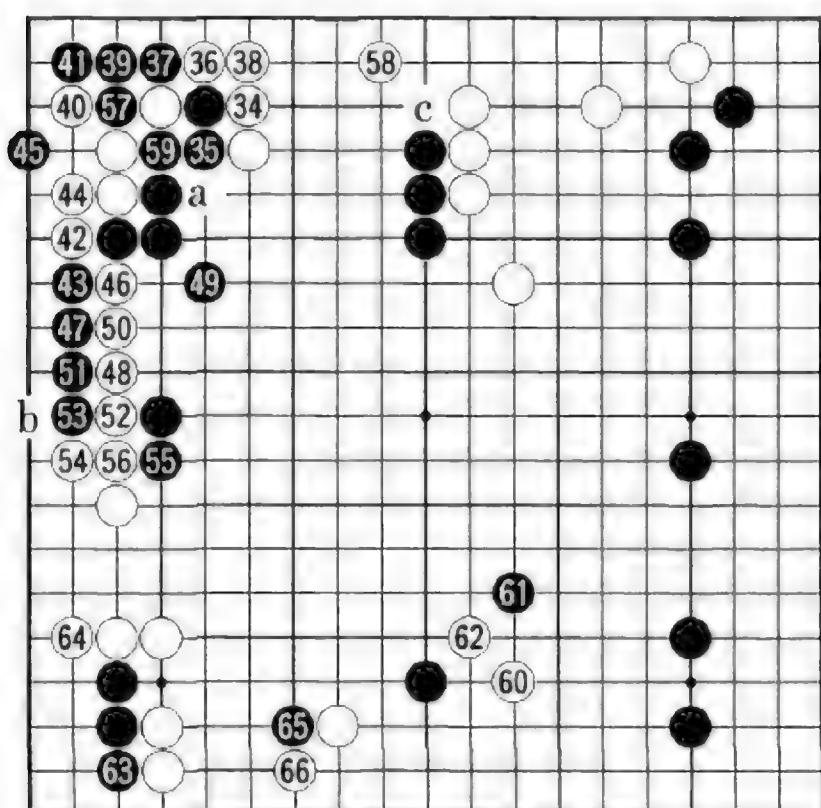
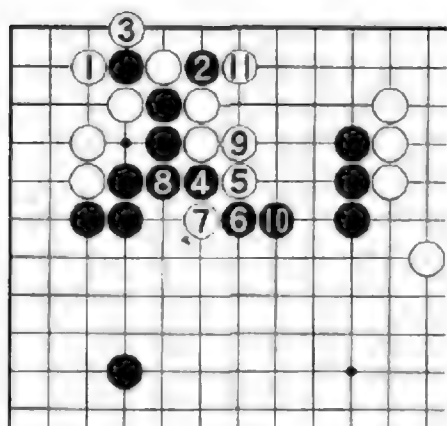
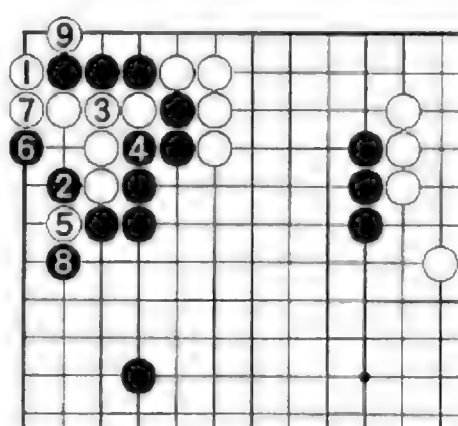


Figure 2 (34-66)



Dia. 2



Dia. 3

The moves from 34 to 40 can therefore be seen to be inevitable. However, Kato's fellow professionals were astonished by White 42 and 44. The reason is that White could win the corner fight by following Dia. 3, so naturally everyone expected him to play this way. Kato: 'To win the semeai, White has cut at 5. Letting Black capture at 8 makes him much too thick. This result is bad for White.'

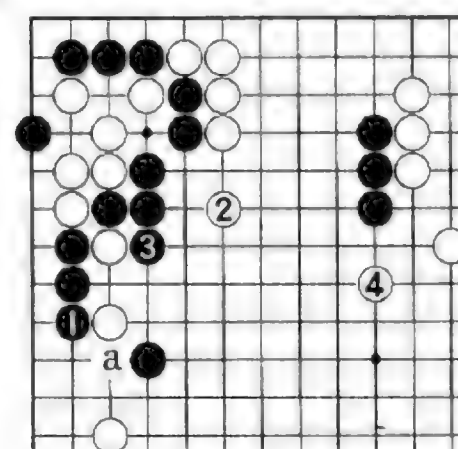
Kato's strategy here is perhaps beyond the grasp of an amateur's understanding. Not merely does he refrain from capturing enemy stones that are on offer, he gives up his own group after first increasing its size. All one can do is take the Meijin's word for it that he knows what he is doing.

Black can't atari at 50 with 47 (or 49) — White will strike at 'a'.

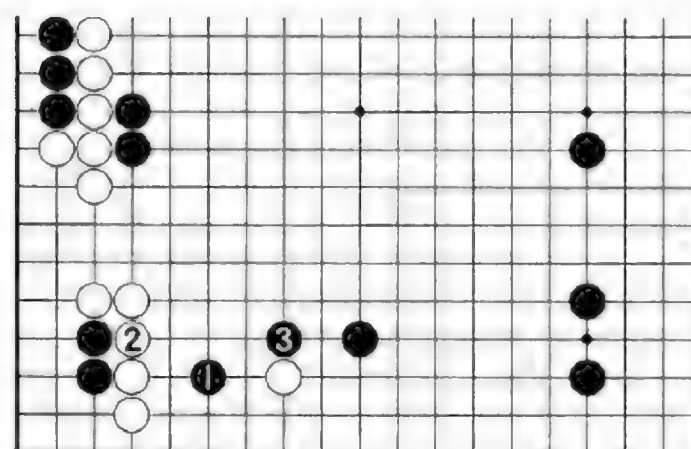
Black 49. If at 1 in Dia. 4, White plays 2 and 4

and can still aim at 'a'.

White 58. If at 'b', White can capture the four stones, but Black will play 59 in sente, then take the top with 'c'. The conclusion is that once White plays 42 and 44, the continuation to 58 is natural. Who has gained in the fight at the top? Kato: 'White has been outplayed a little. The shoulder hit (at 25) was after all severe.' We now see why Kato wished that he had played 22 at 'g' in Figure 1.



Dia. 4

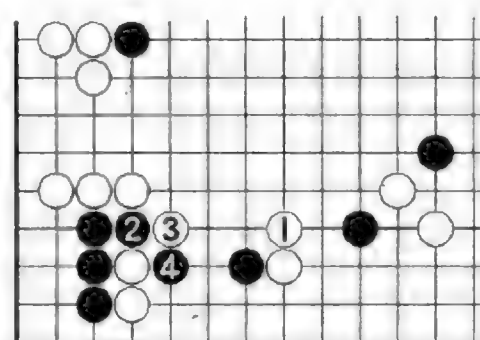


Dia. 5

However, Rin spoiled it by taking gote with 59. If Black omits 59, White can't connect at 59, but he can capture the four stones with a hane at 'b' (which Black would answer at 59). Rin: 'Black 59 was worth 18 points. There's no question that switching to the bottom before White with 1 and 3 in Dia. 5 was bigger.' Judging by this game, go seems to be a competition in sacrificing stones.

White 60 starts the second important fight of the game. Black has to find an effective way of settling his solitary stone here.

White 66. If at 1 in Dia. 6, Black will cut with 2 and 4.



Dia. 6



Ishii Kunio, the referee, shows Rin the sealed move (White 90). Rin had a reasonable game at this stage, but he got into time trouble on the second day while caught up in an extremely complicated fight.

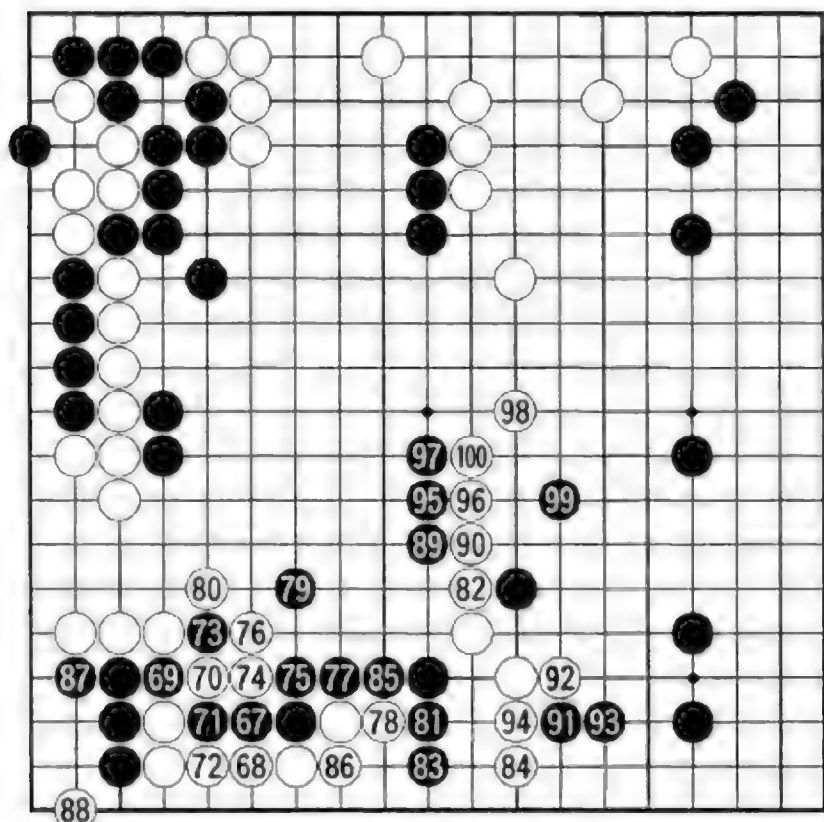


Figure 3 (67–100)

Figure 3 (67–100). An even game

The result at the bottom looks reasonable for Black. The game is even. With 89, he switches to attack.

Figure 4 (101–150). Kato takes the lead.

[The fighting in this figure is the climax of the game, but unfortunately we do not have space to give a detailed analysis.]

White 4 is, for better or for worse, the only move. Black 5 becomes an excellent attacking move, but that can't be helped.

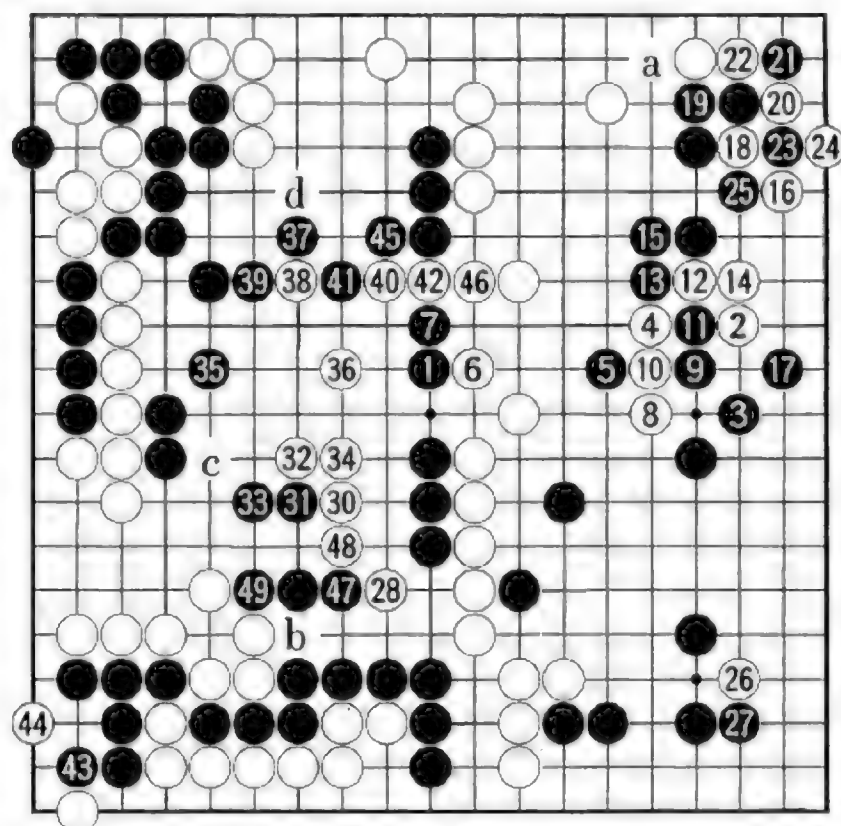


Figure 4 (101–150)
29: ko; 50: ko

Black 17. Better to settle the group by attaching at 'a'. White is able to set up a ko with 18 to 24.

White 28 is a probe, but it also aims at creating ko threats to use in the ko fight.

White 38. If at 'b', Black will answer at 47, giving up the group below and securing the centre. White 38 aims at cutting at 'c'.

Black 39. Short of time, Rin compromises — and loses the game. The strongest answer is Black 'd', which would lead to a very difficult

fight.

White 46. Capturing the five black stones below gives White the lead.

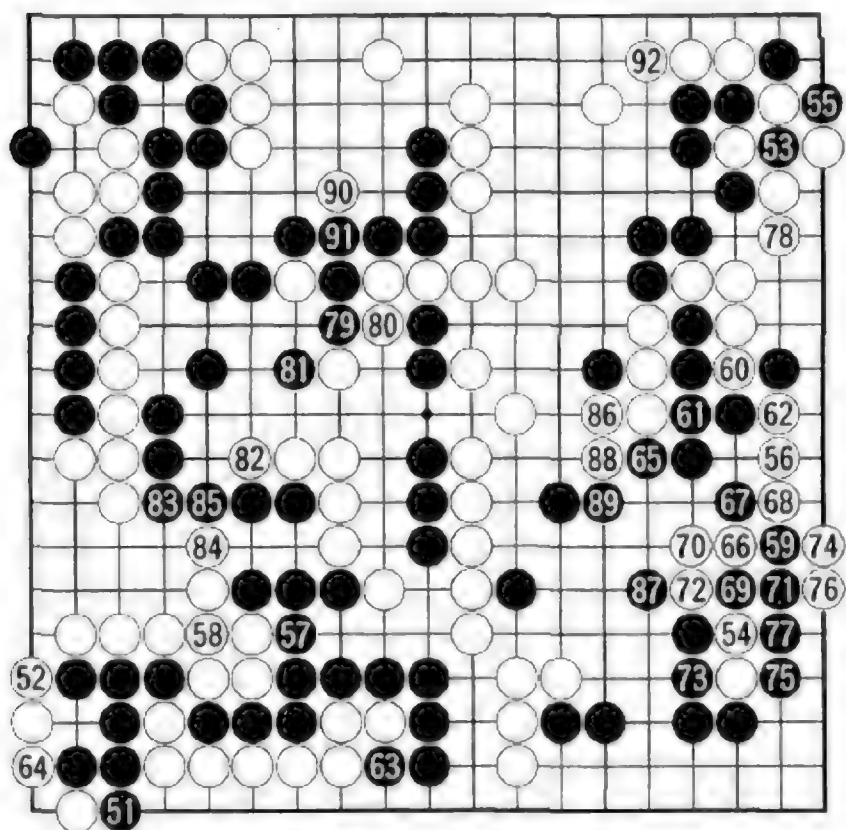


Figure 5 (151-192)

Figure 5 (151-192). *Two in a row for Kato*

Black 55. Black has no choice but to end the ko. When White strikes at the vital point of 56, Black has to lose something.

Rin played on a little before resigning, though there was no hope of saving the game. After the game he couldn't help letting his regret show: after weathering White's attack at the bottom in Figure 3, he had had a good chance of taking this game, but when the complicated fight started after White's invasion on the right he was handicapped by a lack of time (he actually went into byo-yomi on 141).

Black resigns after White 192.

(Adapted from the Asahi newspaper)

Game Three

Why Do Professionals Go Crazy?

Ishida Yoshio

White: Rin Kaiho

Black: Kato Masao

Played at Izu Nagaoka on 7, 8 October 1987.

Figure 1 (1-64). *Ominous developments*

Why did Rin commit a foul in the controversial third game? Leaving my conjectures till later, there was something ominous about this game

from the outset. Both sides built up so much momentum from the large-scale joseki in the bottom left corner that the game got out of control. Playing Black 31 at 'a' or White 34 at 35 would have brought about a lull, yet it seems as if the players were getting a perverse enjoyment out of the hectic infighting.

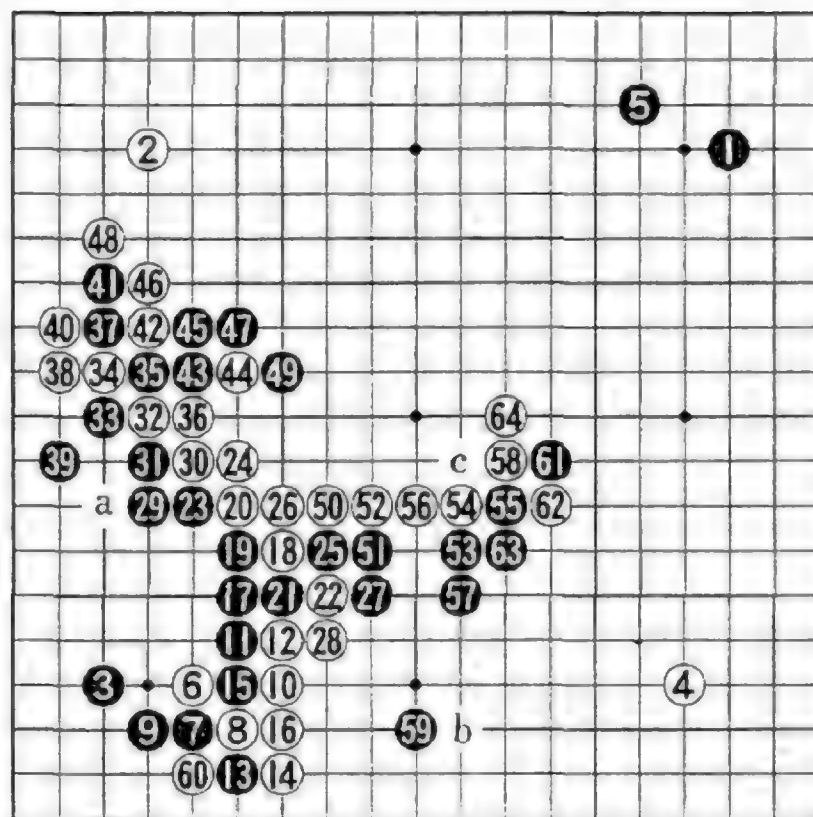


Figure 1 (1-64)

I think that Black is calling the shots in this unsubtle fight. Instead of 54, playing the ordinary sequence of White 56-Black 57-White 'b' would probably have been more leisurely. If White does attach at 54, shouldn't he next extend at 'c'? Because giving Black the forcing move of 59 is painful. Not only is Black left with various forcing moves at the bottom, it's now even possible for him to make a direct attempt to capture the group. Or perhaps Rin was trying to tempt his opponent into overstepping himself.

Figure 2 (65-100). *Aggressiveness backfires.*

White 66 is incredible. If instead White hanes at 67, Black will capture the stone with Black 66 (if next White 75, Black 80). Rin obviously didn't like the idea of this, but letting Black extend solidly at 67 is distressing.

Black 69. Black was able to go this far instead of simply playing 80 because he's got sente moves (to the left). I can agree with 69, but trying to capture White with 71 was a terrible overplay. Attaching at 1 in Dia. 1 would have been more peaceful. If White 2, cutting through with 3 and 5 would be good enough. If White 4 at 5, then Black 'a'.

This was the decisive point of the game, yet Kato was playing awfully fast. I don't know how far he had read it all out, but his sheer aggressiveness made Rin's do-or-die desperation measure succeed.

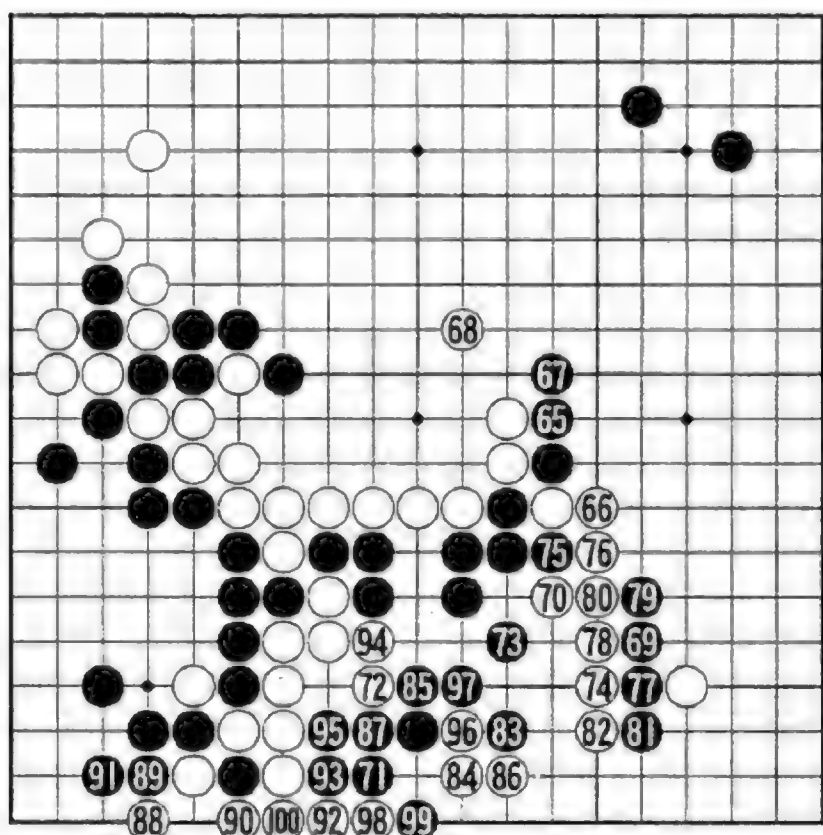
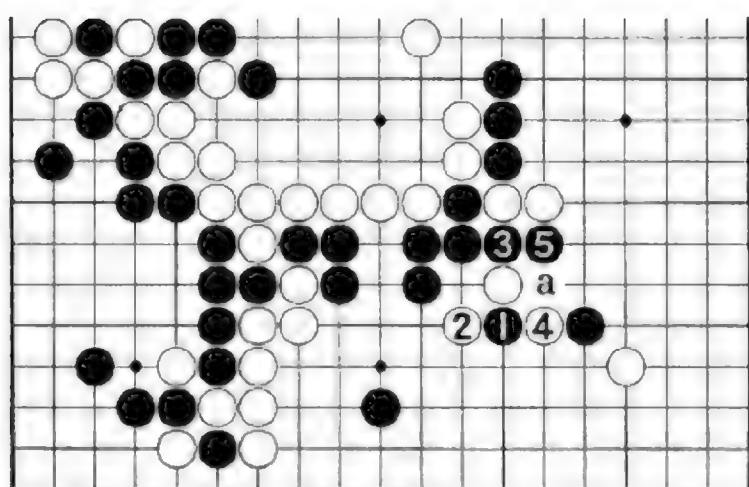


Figure 2 (65-100)



Dia. 1

Black 85 also shows that capturing White is the only thing Black is thinking of. This is the last turning point — if Black had intercepted with Black 86 and set about living, the position would not have been so bad for him. The game turns into a straightforward semeai. Kato's analysis may have been too facile.

Figure 3 (101-147). *White on course for a win*

The white group Black expected to have fun capturing is surprisingly tenacious; as you can see, the capturing race turns into a two-step ko. Three moves are needed to remove the group from the board: a troublesome customer to deal with. Not being able to use 23 to take the ko with 1 in *Dia. 2* is painful for Black. If White secured a large territory with 2 and 4 (or 'a'), he would be

way ahead. White would get over 90 points in this territory alone, yet the black string of territory in the bottom left doesn't even come to 60 points.

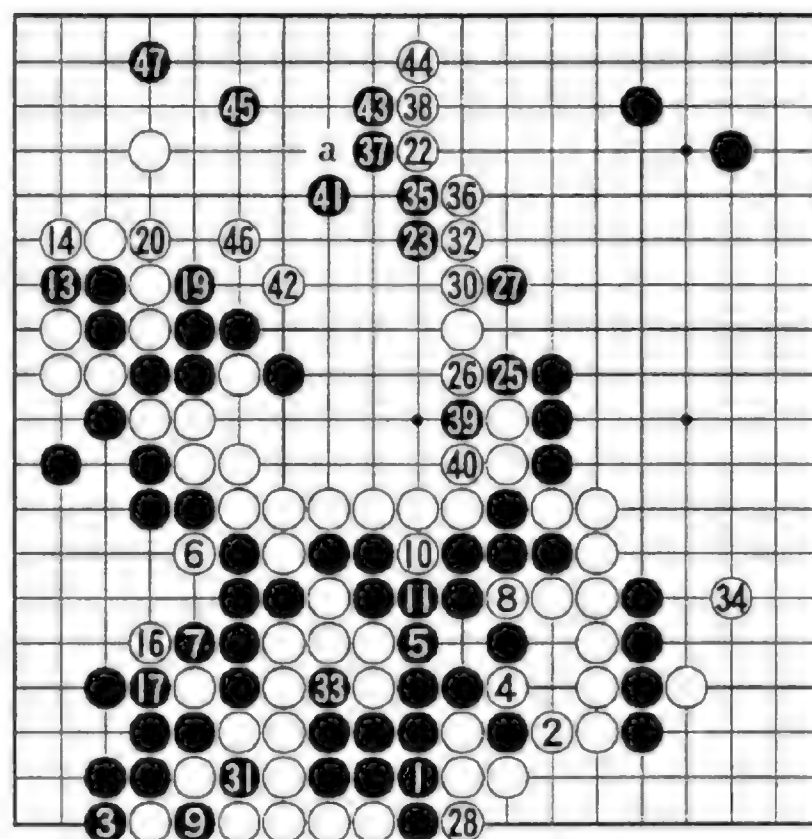
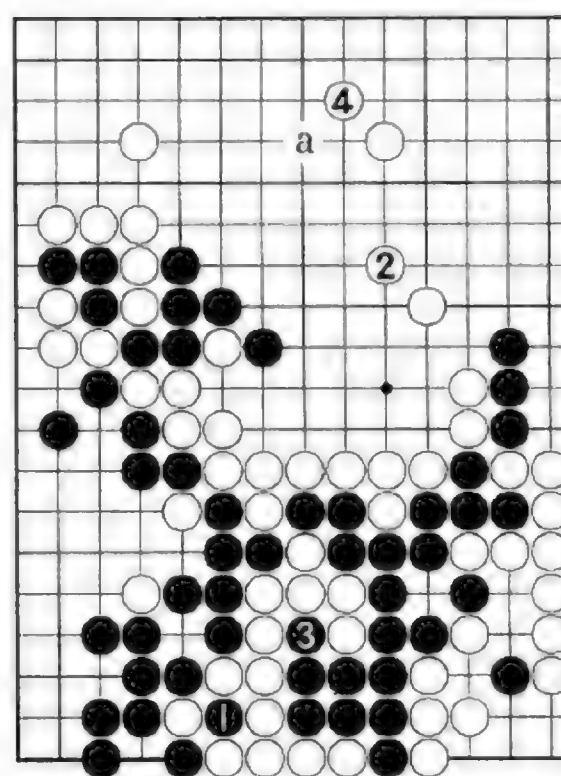


Figure 3 (101-147)
ko: 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 29



Dia. 2

If Black answers White 30 at 32, then he will lose the game if he loses the ko. Black has no choice but to end the ko with 31 and 33, but at this instant White was set on the path to victory.

White 34 is overdoing things. If he emphasized territory by playing at 'a', he would have got a result similar to *Dia. 2* and secured a more definite lead.

Black invades desperately at 35 — he can't afford to worry about good style. Although he manages to complicate the position a little, White's win seems unaffected.

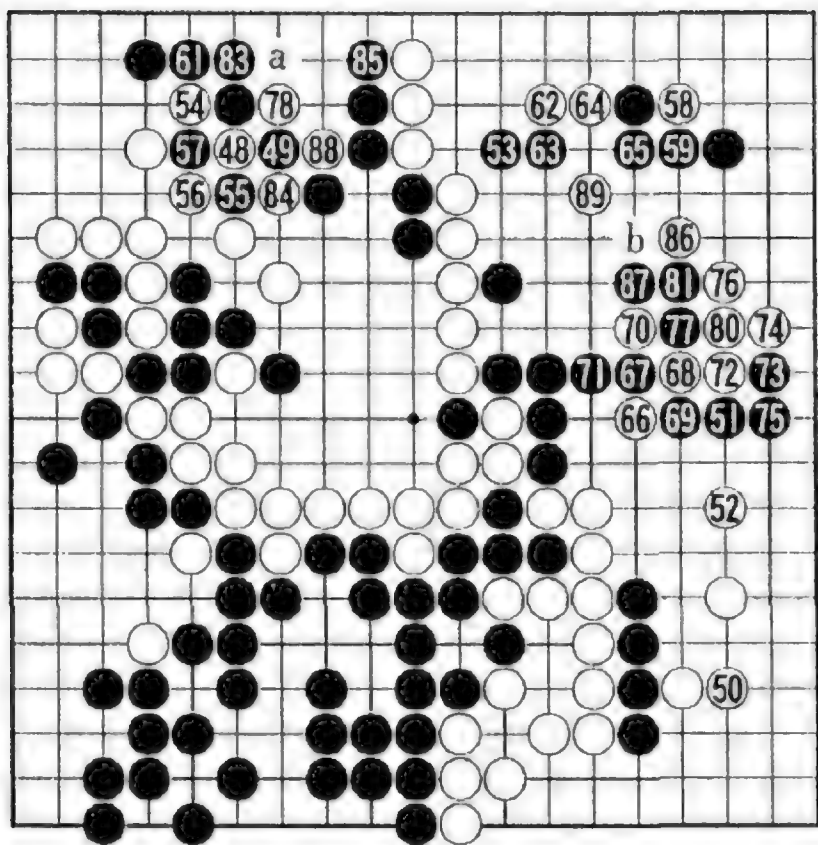
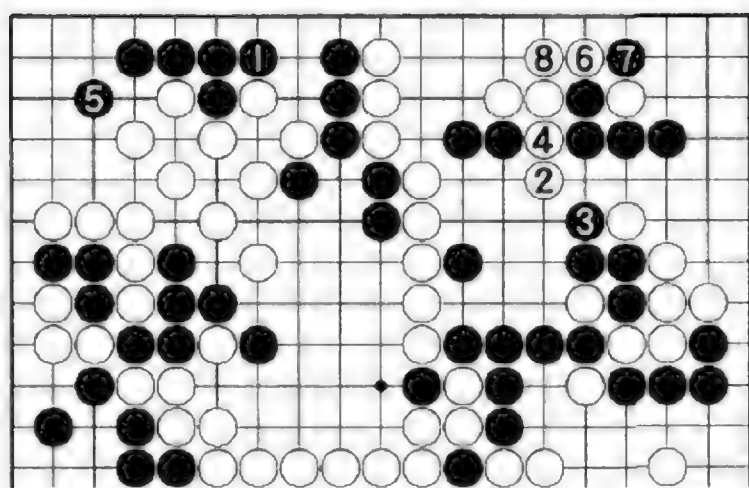


Figure 4 (148-189)
ko: 60, 79, 82



Dia. 3

Figure 4 (148-189). Both players in a frenzy

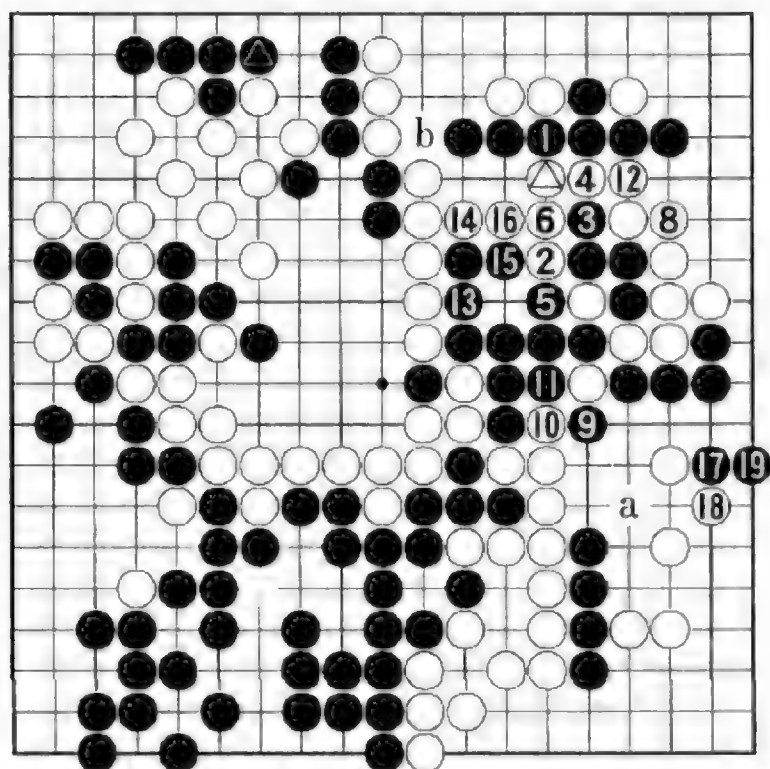
Rin was playing solidly, as could be seen in the way he created aji with 66 etc. and the way he won the ko with 82. He should have been able to wrap up the game, but after 88 he hallucinated that Black had already defended at 'a' and so he played two moves in a row with 89.

Readers may find it strange that a professional should play two moves in a row, but I feel that I understand. The real mystery was Kato. Incredibly, he didn't realize that Rin had played two moves and by reflex he answered at 'b'. Both sides were playing in a frenzy.

Dia 3. If Black had linked up with 1 and White 2 to 4 had followed, White would probably have been ahead even on the board.

White forfeits the game after White 189.

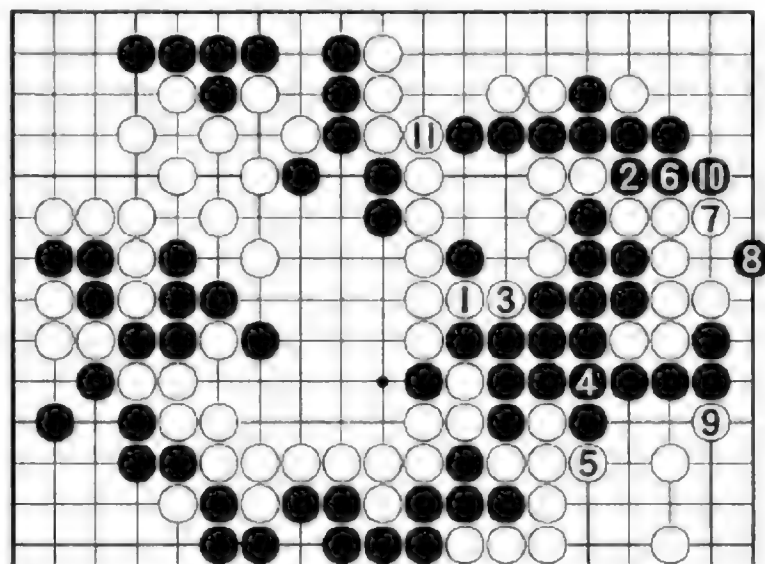
Let's examine what would have happened if Rin hadn't made the illegal move.



Dia. 4
7: connects

Dia. 4. Assuming Black has linked up with the marked stone, then his best answer to the marked white stone is connecting at 1. White then squeezes and the continuation to 11 would be likely whoever was playing.

If White is then greedy and connects at 12, he will find himself in danger, as Black has the good move of 13. After White links up with 14 and 16, Black lives with 17 and 19, and peeping at 'a' and cutting at 'b' are now miai for him. This will be a bad loss for White. Instead of 12 —



Dia. 5: the phantom victory

Dia. 5. Calmly pushing through at 1 is best. White sacrifices the stones on the side, letting Black cut at 2. White limits the size of his loss with 5 to 9, then switches to 11. He calculates that Black will only be able to win on the board by two or three points. In short, although there are some danger spots left, White's win is safe.

Well, why did Rin make the illegal move? I would like to make my own conjectures.



Rin holds his head in dismay at what he has done.

Danger lurks when your mood changes.

According to the record, Rin made the pon-nuki at 88 in Figure 4 at 5.31 p.m. At that instant the dinner break started. Of course, if the players agree, they can forgo the dinner break and continue playing. My own opinion is that this is much less messy; in that case, it's inconceivable that Rin would have played two moves in a row. But for Rin, being harried by byo-yomi as he was, this break was a valuable period. In this hour he would to some degree be able to work out how the game was going to progress. To say that he would have been better off not taking the break is just hindsight.

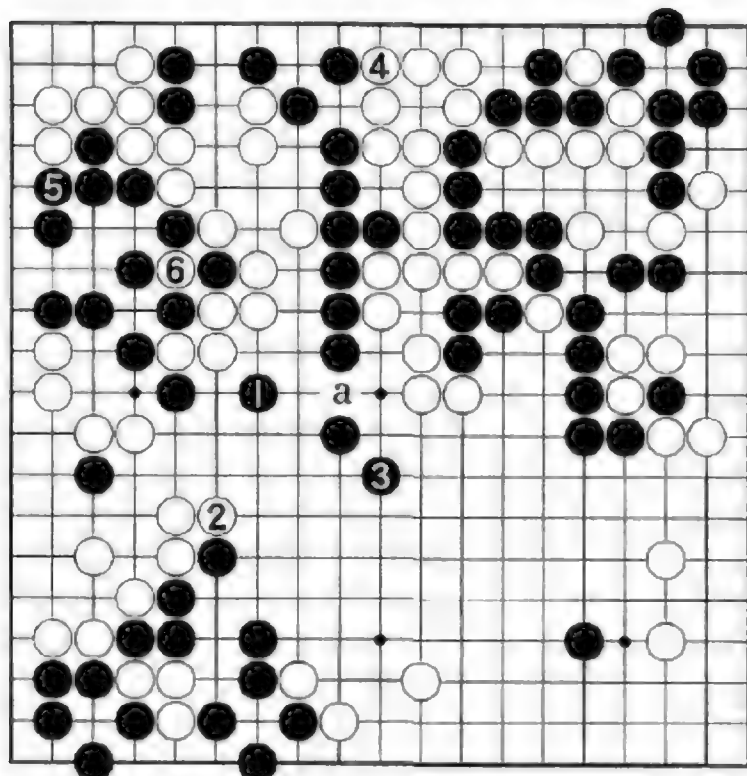
During the break Rin must have thought about various possibilities after Black links up with the marked stone in Dia. 4. Because this was the only move for Black. Then when the game resumed he just played the move he'd decided on. It's that simple.

The most dangerous periods are when your mood changes. I think that in Rin's case he probably underwent a twofold or threefold change in mood. On the board he had persevered in a very tough position and had

managed to pull within sight of victory. He must have felt relieved. That's the first change. Just then the dinner break started. He must have again felt relieved. That's the second change. After the game resumed, he had probably braced himself for one more big effort. Perhaps you could call this another change in mood.

If you look at past examples of illegal moves, you find that the great majority of them were made immediately after a break. This tends to support my theory about a change in the player's mood being responsible. The same applies to blunders. They often appear after a favourable game has run into rough weather, changing your mood until then. You're no longer in your right mind and whether you're aware of it or not, you fall prey to impatience. It's the same when a bad game suddenly makes a turn for the better. A psychologist would be able to come up with some interesting data if he studied the shifts and the currents in the emotions of a professional playing a game. What would we discover if we analysed the data with a computer? Let's put such thoughts aside. The interest of go lies in the fact that it can't be explained by a computer.

Kato's failure to realize that Rin had played two moves in a row is also a very interesting phenomenon. His state of mind was such that it wouldn't have been surprising if he had played two moves in a row. Kato had also undergone a change in mood as he lost his lead. His fatigue may also have reached a peak, for he was fighting two title matches simultaneously and his mind was probably a blank. I've also had this experience.



Dia. 6

1971 Pro Best Ten, Game 3. White: Kajiwaru

Dia. 6. I also made an illegal move, in the 1971 Pro Best Ten title match, played at the same time as the 26th Honinbo title match.

I was ahead in this game, but I had missed a number of chances to finish White off and I was starting to get upset. My mind was a blank when I played 1, which was a terrible, meaningless move. Black 1 only invites White to turn at 2, a move he is happy to play without any invitation. White's wedging move at 'a' is now a real threat. Although I made a makeshift defensive move at 3, then lived with 5, I must have been going crazy with regret over 1. Going crazy wouldn't have been so bad — actually I may have been thinking of nothing at all.

When White took the ko with 6, I immediately recaptured it. I took the ko without first making a ko threat. When I look back, I can't understand how I could have been so stupid. I imagine that Rin was in a similar state of mind. I of course forfeited the game.

As you can imagine, I was quite upset. I drowned myself in alcohol that night. At that

time I was still a live-in disciple. I remember how worried I was about how to report the result to Kitani Sensei. The next morning, when I stated the facts simply, Kitani did not say anything.

Putting aside my memories, it wouldn't be surprising if all professionals went mad. That's how delicate a game go is. Rin and Kato are mentally two of the toughest of all professionals, yet look at them. By chance Rin was the sufferer this time, but you can only ascribe that to bad luck. On the other hand, it's frightening how lucky Kato is — with this kind of momentum, how can he ever lose? The Meijin title match seems to have been decided.

Incidentally, I hear that this is the second game Kato has won on a forfeit. How can anyone prevail against this kind of luck?

(*'Kido'*, December 1987)

Game Four

White: Kato Masao

Black: Rin Kaiho

Played in Fukuoka on 21, 22 October 1987.

Commentary by Kato.

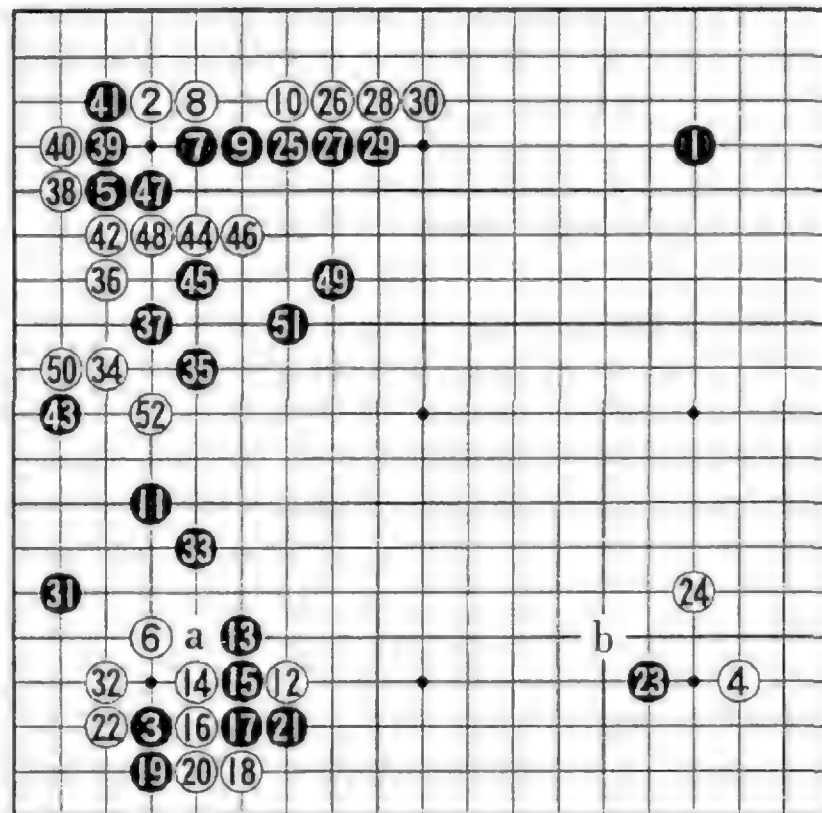


Figure 1 (1-52)

Figure 1 (1-52). Slack play by Black

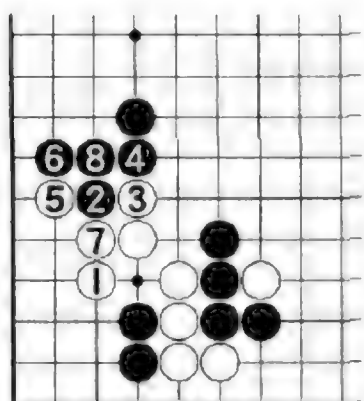
I made a good start in this game, but it turned bad for me in a flash in the middle game and I had a very tough fight.

Rin adopted a very positive strategy with 7 etc. in this opposing-komoku (3-4 points) opening. His intention when he pressed at 7 was not to attach at 'a' but to play 13.

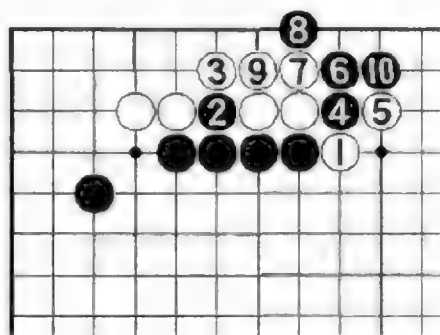
I thought hard about 22. When I play here, Black can aim at the hane at 32. However, if I play the kosumi of 1 in *Dia. 1*, Black can attack at 2; White has to help him solidify his side position with 3 to 7, which I disliked.

Black keeps on pushing up to 29 — these are good forcing moves. Instead of 28 —

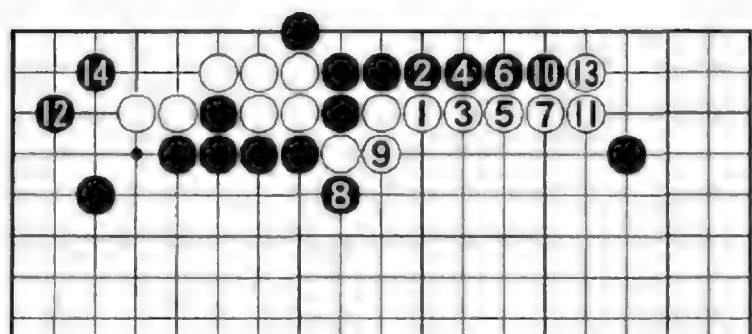
Dia. 2. If I hane at 1, I will be in trouble after Black 2 and 4. If White plays 5 and 7, then after 10 —



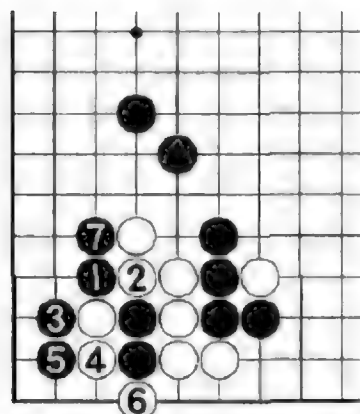
Dia. 1



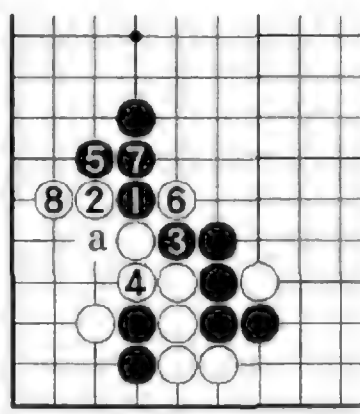
Dia. 2



Dia. 3



Dia. 4



Dia. 5

Dia. 3. Black crawls all the way to 10, then wins the fight after 14.

The exchange of 31 for 32, strengthening White, is bad. If Black wants to do something here, he should simply play at 33. That is —

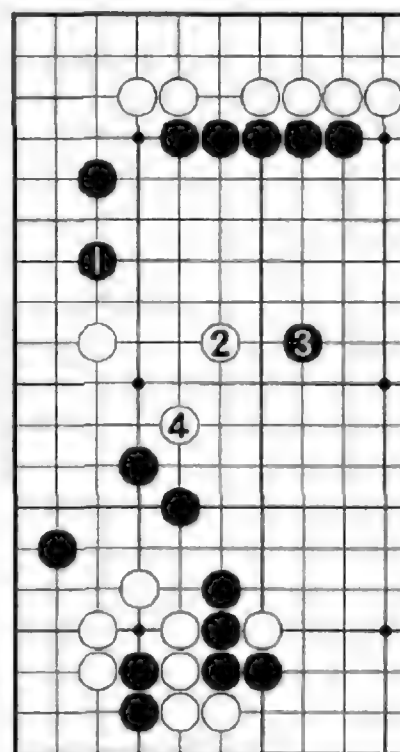
Dia. 4. When Black has played the marked stone, he can aim at playing 1 to 7 later. The presence of this threat makes it hard for White to initiate action on the left side.

If instead Black plays 31 at 1 in *Dia. 5*, White can be content to answer with 2 to 8; Black's left-side position remains open at the side. There is also the problem of what happens if Black cuts at

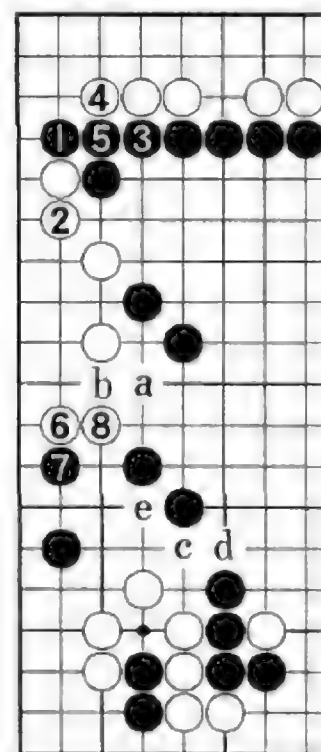
'a' instead of 3, but taking the overall position into account, this is not necessarily good.

Since White was kind enough to make the 31–32 exchange, it became easy for me to invade the left side at 34.

As Rin commented after the game, he really should have followed *Dia. 6* instead of capping at 35. White will play 2 and 4, but attacking like this is better, I think. It was relatively easy for White to settle his group with 36 and 38.



Dia. 6



Dia. 7

Black 39. If Black blocks at 1 in *Dia. 7*, White is pretty well alive after 8. If Black later exchanges 'a' for White 'b', White 'c' puts him on the spot. If he blocks at 'd', White can continue with 'e'. Rin disliked this prospect.

White gets a splendid shape with 42. Black 43 would normally be played at 44, but White would live on a large scale with 43. Still, the result to 49 is unsatisfactory for Black.

White 52 is dubious: better to tenuki and press at 'b'.



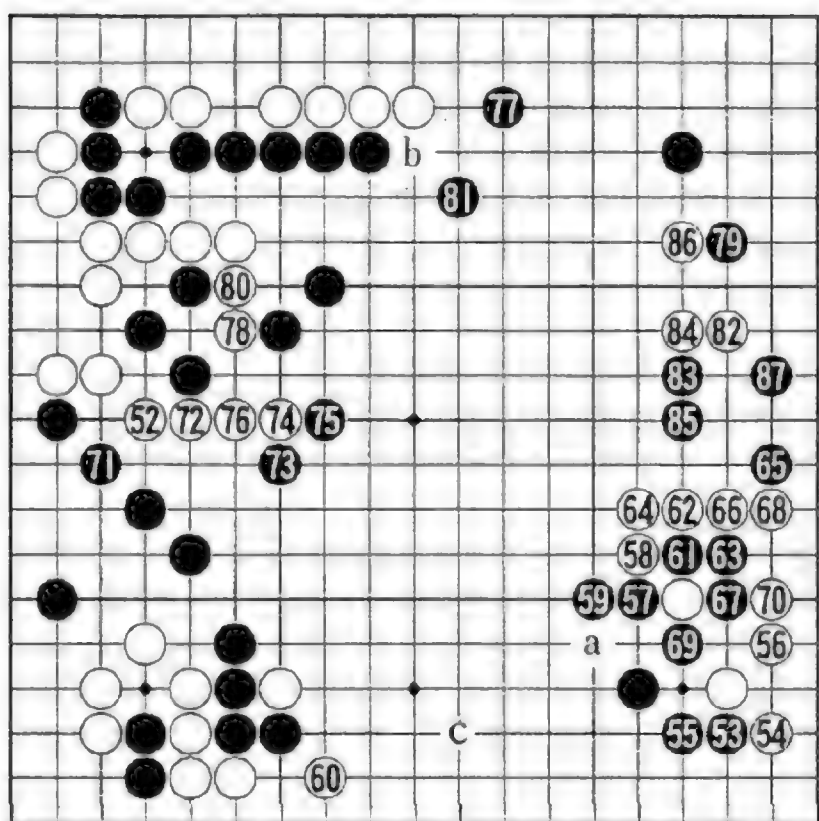
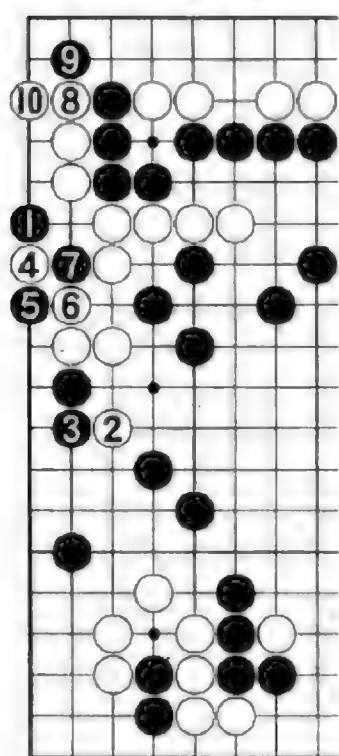
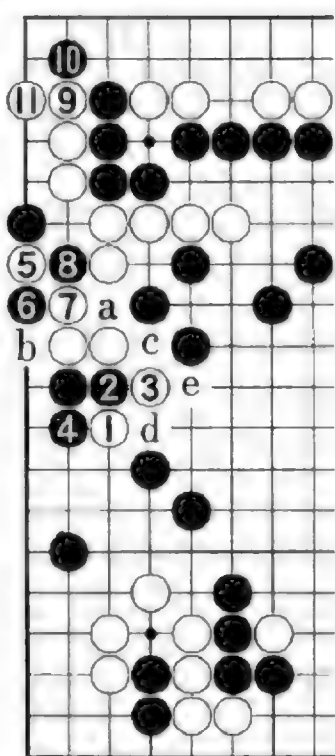


Figure 2 (52-87)



Dia. 8



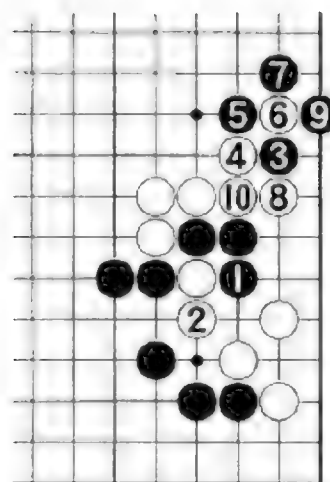
Dia. 9

Figure 2 (52-87). *Slack moves give Black the lead.*

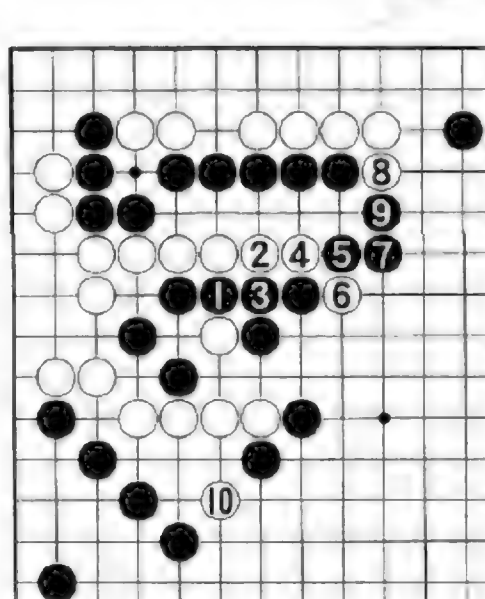
I didn't realize it at the time, but according to research carried out at the Nihon Ki-in (by Takemiya, Yamabe and others), I could have switched 52 to 'a'. If I tenuki —

Dia. 8. The placement at 1 looks menacing, but White can live with 2 to 10. If next Black connects on the edge, White gets two eyes, thanks to an oi-otoshi tesuji (i.e. successive ataris, made possible by 2). Instead of 3 —

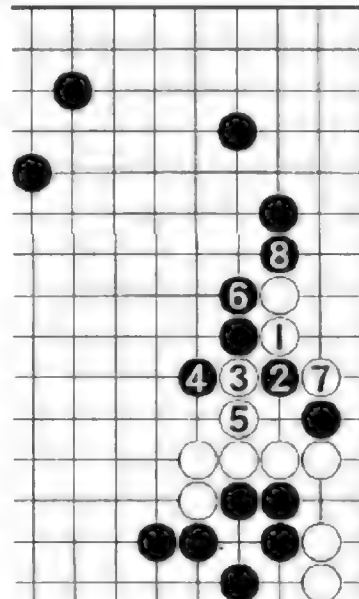
Dia. 9. Black 2 and 4 are a tesuji for reducing White's liberties; after 11 Black can play a ko with Black 'a', White 'b', Black 'c'. However, instead of 5 White will connect at 'c' and after Black 'd' move out with White 'e'. In short, White has nothing to fear here, so he could have switched elsewhere.



Dia. 10



Dia. 11



Dia. 12

White 60 in response to 57 and 59 is natural. Playing 60 at 62 would let Black secure the bottom by blocking to the left of 60; that would be unbearable.

Black 65. If Black ataris first with 1 in *Dia. 10*, White will answer 3 by making a trade, but then the exchange of 1 for 2 becomes a loss for Black. Black hopes to get this result without making the 1-2 exchange.

White 66. The sealed move. (Time taken on the first day was four hours 34 minutes by Black to two hours 55 minutes by White.)

Black 67. Because of the change in order (from *Dia. 10*), White counters with 68 and 70. Since he has cut off the black stone at 65, this result could be called a success for White. That, on top of the easy time he's had on the left side, means that at this stage the game is promising for White.

White 78 is a tesuji. If Black 79 at 1 in *Dia. 11*, White plans to fight vigorously, forcing with 2 to 8, then moving out with 10; this way White would be able to dispense with an eye-making move on the side.

Even so, White 80 is extremely slack: turning at 'b' is the only move. Giving Black three good points in succession with 77, 79, and 81 has thrown White's lead into doubt.

On top of that, White 82 is a bad move. When Black attacks strongly at 83, White finds himself in bad trouble. Even though it would have left him behind, White had no choice but to guard against this attack by playing the high move at 83. (Black would then play at 82 himself, but White could ignore that and switch to 'c' at the bottom. If instead Black played at the bottom, White could continue with 82, making a solid position.)

White 84. White must push up. The game would be decisively lost if he tried to link up with 1 in *Dia. 12*. Sealing White in with 2 to 8 would be too good.

Black 85 splits White's position into two. However, Black's next move is extremely dubious. Black 87 is probably the cause of Black's losing the game.

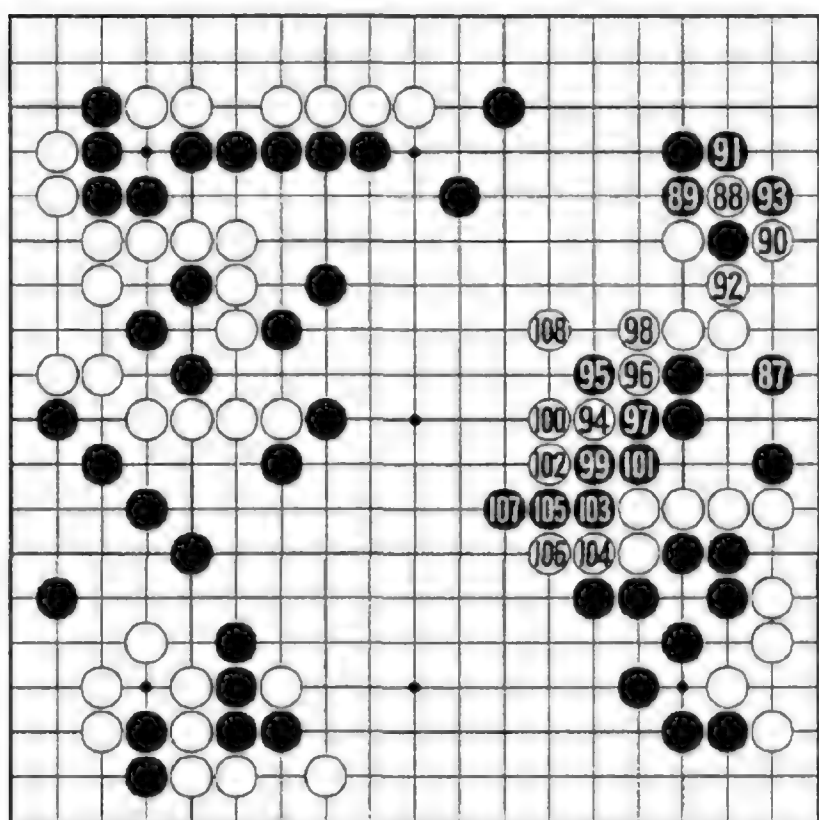


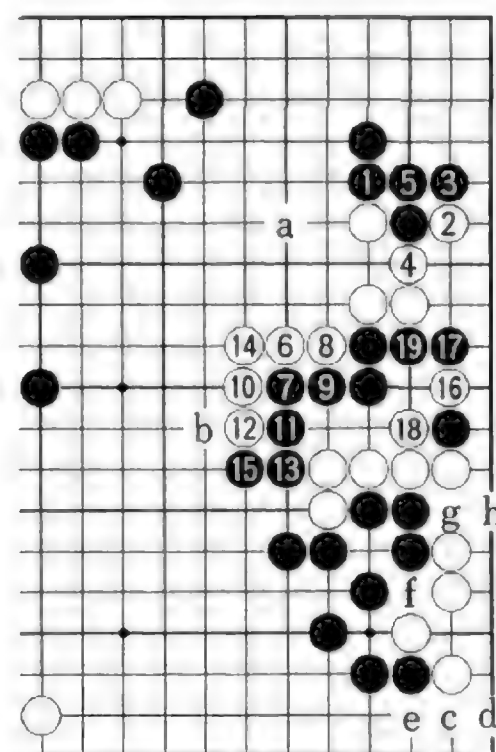
Figure 3 (87-108)

Figure 3 (87-108). *The losing move and an upset*

Black 87, the first move played after lunch on the second day, hurts Black's game: giving White the chance to capture a stone with 88 and 90 is bad. Attacking with an atari at 93 after White had already taken the stone lacks forcefulness. Instead of 87 —

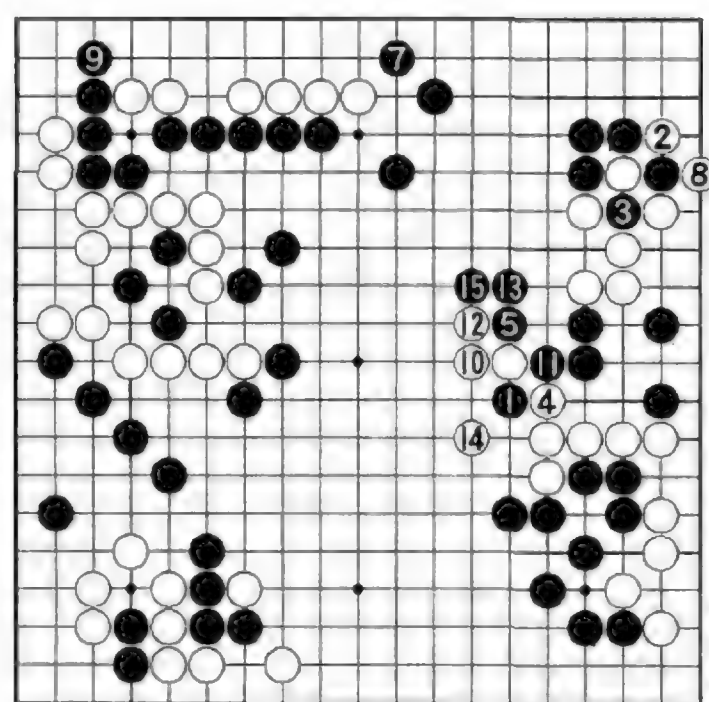
Dia. 13. Thrusting into White with 1 is the only move. If White 2 to 6, Black moves out with 7. White's group at the bottom lives with 16 and 18, but if White now plays 'a', attacking with Black 'b' is good enough; this way Black would be winning. Black will probably also get a chance to play at the bottom; the sequence Black 'c',

White 'd', Black 'e' is sente, forcing White 'f' (if omitted, Black kills White with 'g', White 'h', Black 'f'). That means that with 87 Black had a chance to decide the game.



Dia. 13

Black 95 was the straightforward answer to 94, but this was Black's last chance. Rin's opinion was that he should have attached on the rear side at 1 in *Dia. 14*.



Dia. 14

6: ko

Dia. 14. If White plays 4 immediately in response to 1, Black will attach at 5 and be able to move out. There is no guarantee that White will be able to make two eyes in the centre, so he will challenge Black to a ko by cutting at 2. He can then use 4 as a ko threat. In that case, the trade with 7 to 9 is bound to follow. The result to 15 here would clearly give Black a chance of winning the game.

Once Black attaches at 95, the continuation to 108 cannot be varied. If you compare this result to Dia. 13, the significant difference is that White breaks through into the centre in sente with 104 and 106, which means that Black 87, a move which aimed at attacking the white group below, has completely backfired. When White settles both groups up to 108, Black loses all prospect of victory.

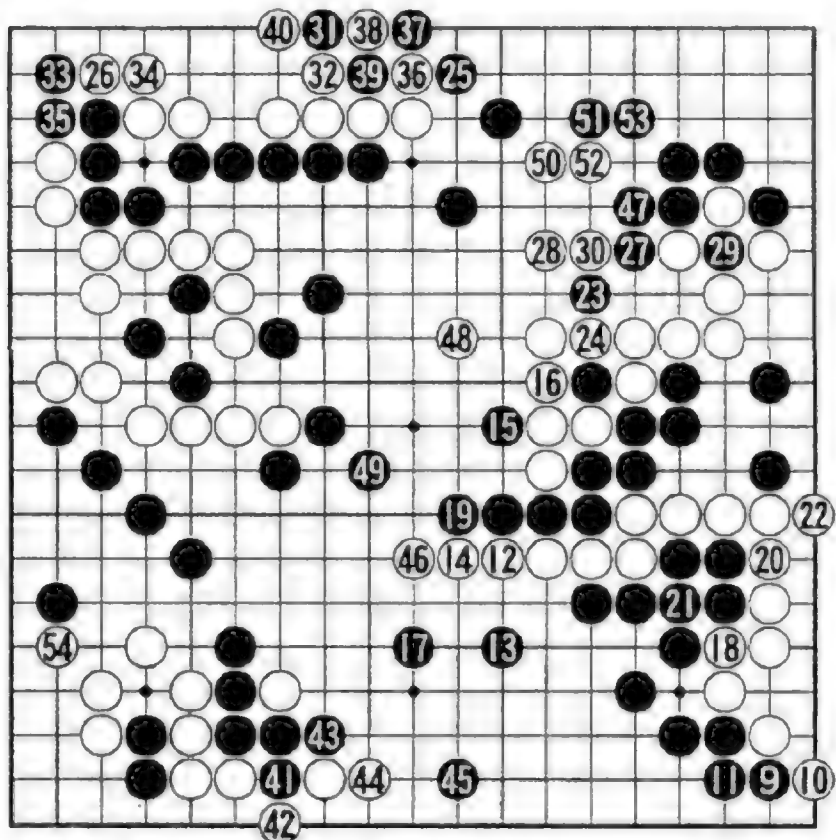


Figure 4 (109-154)

Figure 4 (109-154). *Early profit makes the difference.*

Black 95 in Figure 3 took the pressure off White. The white group above not only survived the attack but also made good shape in the process. The group below also lives up to 22. The profit that White took in the first half of the game now makes its presence felt.

After 54 there is no way that Black can give the komi.

Figure 5 (155-254). *Eight wins in a row.*

Rin's attempt to play a Takemiya-style large moyo didn't work out well. His natural fondness for territory asserted itself with 31 in Figure 1. White later slipped up, letting Black back into the game, but Rin wasted his chances.

This win gave Kato eight wins in a row in Meijin title matches. Rin, as did Kobayashi Koichi the year before, found that Kato has developed into a masterly strategist, adept at controlling the flow of the game. In particular, his policy in recent years of playing the fuseki and early middle game quickly, leaving him plenty of time for the endgame, has paid dividends in rais-

ing his winning percentage. Of course, such a policy is only viable for someone with real confidence in his mastery of the game.

White wins by 3 1/2 points.

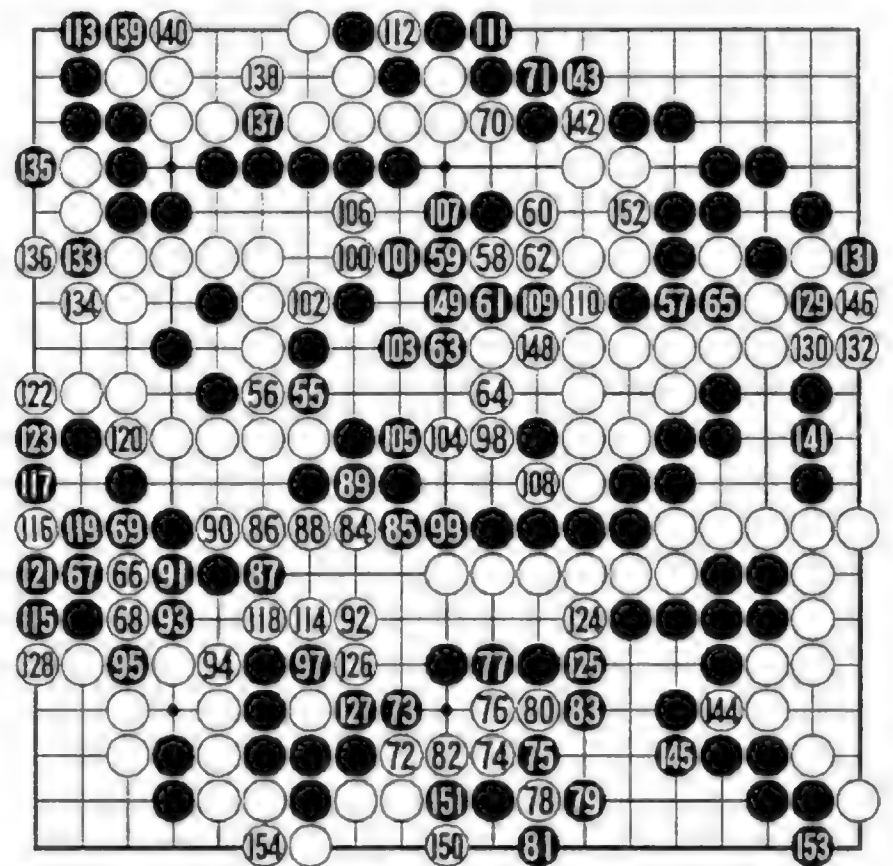


Figure 5 (155-254)

96: retakes (at 68); 147: connects (left of 131)

After the game Kato was interviewed by Kido.

Kido: Congratulations on your first defence of the Meijin title. You couldn't have expected to do it with straight wins. How do you feel now that it's over?

Kato: I'm as surprised as anyone. Rin and I have been pretty evenly matched over the years, so I didn't expect a one-sided result. I can only put it down to luck. Except for the first game in New York, where I was pleased with my play, the games weren't good ones for me. I was the one in trouble most of the time in Games Two to Four, so there would be nothing odd about it if the score at this stage were 3-1 against me.

Kido: What people are saying is that when the game is a little bad for you, you play patiently, as you've got the power to stage an upset in the latter part of the game and the endgame.

Kato: Luck's been on my side recently. I've turned around a lot of games that were bad for me. In this series also there was one upset after another; I was losing the third game, but Rin's foul made me a gift of the game.

Kido: That game caused quite a stir even outside the go world; some weekly magazines had articles about it.



Kato modestly has trouble explaining how he defended his title.

Kato: It was broadcast across the whole country the same day on the NHK news — it made news even with people who know nothing about go.

Kido: You seemed to be in a bit of a daze yourself at the time.

Kato: It was just a momentary aberration on Rin's part. I felt bad about winning like that. Rin had played where I thought he would, so purely as reflex I played the move that I thought was the only answer. I just happened to look up and saw that Iwata [Tatsuaki, the referee] was saying something — he was talking to Rin. I wondered if I'd done something odd, so I had a proper look and realized that I hadn't played the previous

move. I took longer to wake up to it than Rin.

Kido: It was the evening of the second day, so you were both completely exhausted.

Kato: Everything was a blur — I can't remember what happened when. I was exhausted and during the dinner break before the illegal move I went and lay down in my room and had almost nothing to eat.

If Rin had won this game, the score would have been 2–1 and there's no telling what would have happened. In the end, I won four straight, but in effect the fate of the match was decided by the third game.

(*'Kido'*, December 1987. Meijin report translated by John Power.)

Continued from page 24

Figure 7 (201–261). A lucky win

LG: This was an auspicious start. To be frank, most people consider you the underdog in this series.

KK: Really? Ah, I guess so.

LG: After all, you'd just lost the Tengen title

and weren't in very good form. Still, this win may determine the flow of the match.

KK: I certainly hope so. At any rate, I'm going to give this defence everything I've got.

LG: This is your last fortress. You've got to defend it to the death.

(*'Let's Go'*, March 1988. Translated by John Power.)

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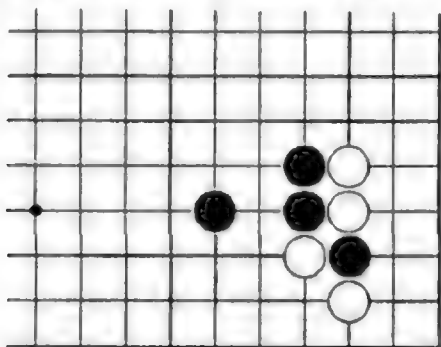
Be sure to ask about the 1988 LINC GO CHAMPIONSHIP in September

(Leisure LINC is also looking for top-ranked go players to host simultaneous exhibitions, provide lessons, write instructional and editorial columns, etc.)

36 Tesuji Patterns

Sakata Eio

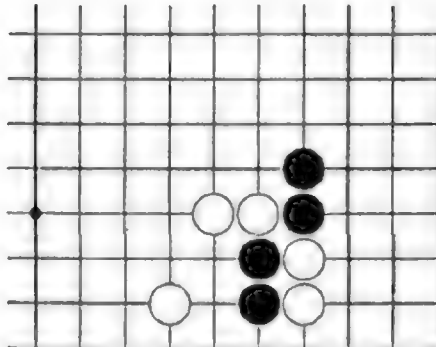
In this issue we resume publication of the two new problems series that we launched in GW49. The first, by Sakata, Honorary Honinbo, covers the fundamental tesuji patterns that any player who is hoping to reach shodan has to master. Like the following article, it is keyed to the mid-kyu level, but it should prove useful for study by players of all levels.



4. *Black to play*

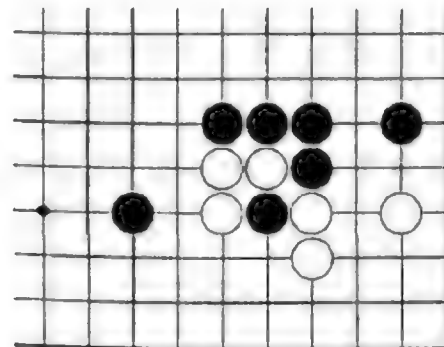
This position comes up in a 5-4 joseki. What is Black's best continuation?

Answers on page 41.



5. *Black to play*

Black looks like coming out on the losing end of this semeai — how can he turn the tables on White?

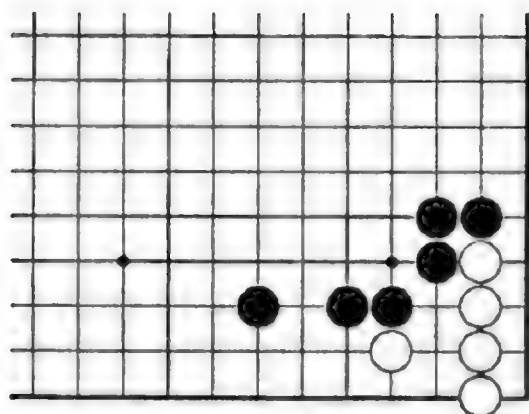


6. *Black to play*

How can Black make all his stones work together and get the maximum gain out of this position?

36 Life and Death Patterns

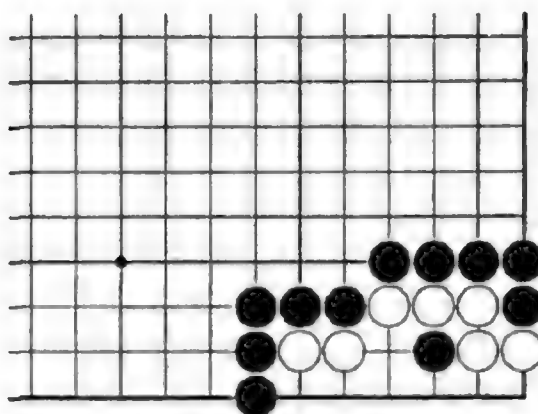
Kato Masao



4. *Black to play*

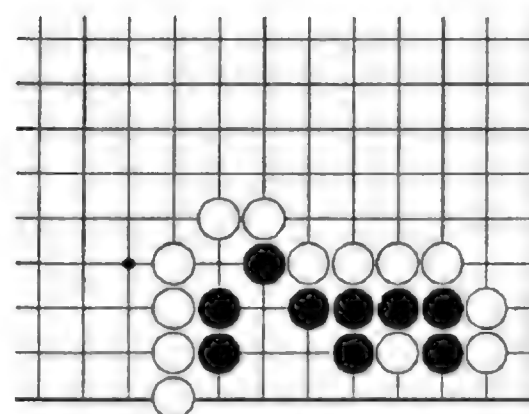
Black can't do anything about the corner eye, so how does he destroy the eye on the side?

Answers on page 42.



5. *Black to play.*

How can Black reduce White to one eye? Take care not to give White a ko.



6. *White to play*

To kill Black you have to play three basic tesujis — in the right order. Careful reading is called for here.

Interview with David Erbach

David Erbach is the founder and editor of the newsletter Computer Go. Computer Go was first published in 1986. It is the only newsletter devoted entirely to the subject of computer go.

Go World: Can computers and go really mix?

David Erbach: Maybe not. But for me, the implausibility of the mixture is part of the attraction.

GW: How did you come to be interested in computer go?

DE: I learned the game as a mathematics research student in Cambridge. Now I work professionally in computing, most recently in the development of expert systems. So it's a natural offspring of professional interests. Also, I like the idea of a problem like go, which seems superfi-

cially so natural for computers, and at which, in fact, computers are so helpless.

GW: Why is that problem interesting?

DE: If you're a professional go player, it probably isn't. But several of the hardest problems in artificial intelligence have particularly clear formulations in go. There is a time for pattern recognition, a time for reading deeply, a time for reading broadly, and a time for heuristic rules. There are also times for other concepts which haven't yet been clearly defined. Perhaps the hardest problem of all is deciding which approach is appropriate in any given position. And it would be marvelous to have some ideas about how a computer go program could learn from its experience. Of course, computers aren't the only ones who have trouble with these notions.

GW: How strong are the strongest programs?

DE: Maybe 12-15 kyu. All programs I've seen will make a few terrible moves every game. At the moment, there seems to be no program which is respectable at all parts of the game.

GW: Why are current programs so weak?

DE: Anyone who knows the answer to that question should please write an article. The problems of devising go algorithms are very hard. Perhaps the fundamental problem is that it's hard to make an algorithm 'understand' what it's doing, so that it can play consistent moves. At the moment, we don't have a good idea what the structure of a strong program would be. Until we have, we won't even know when the going is going to get tough.

GW: When will we see a shodan level program?

DE: Not very soon. Perhaps not until the turn of the century, although I'd be pleased to have someone prove that prediction wrong.

GW: How do computer go problems compare to computer chess?

DE: Compared to human play, chess programs are much stronger. There seem to be three main differences: The opening is much less stereotyped in go. The search trees in go are astronomically larger than those in chess. Finally, a 'non-losing' strategy, which simply plays to avoid material loss, seems to get you a long way in chess. Go has no tactic which is as simple and does as well. Still, it would be interesting to know how far along we would be if go had had as much time devoted to it as chess has.

GW: Is computer go a western phenomenon?

DE: So far, largely, yes, although Mr. Ing has



provoked considerable interest in Taiwan. Perhaps the Japanese simply have a sober assessment of the difficulty. There is a Mr. Hayashi at the Japanese Future Technologies Laboratory who has a reasonable program. I don't know of any interest in the People's Republic of China.

GW: What kind of research projects would you like to see carried out?

DE: It would be very instructive to find a tolerant professional who was willing to undergo a few hours of 'knowledge engineering' interviews, as practised by the artificial intelligence community. Extracts from such interviews might well be interesting to ordinary go players, too, as a vision of how professionals think. But, unfortunately, I don't know who would be willing to finance such a project.

GW: What are the major computer go tournaments?

DE: At the moment, there are really only three. The most famous and best-financed is, of course, the Ing Foundation tournament in Taipei. That one has become large enough that they now intend to have preliminary tournaments in the USA and Europe. Also, there is a tournament at the European Go Congress, this year in Hamburg. The oldest and most experimental is held at the Usenik Computer Conference. David Levy, of London and computer chess fame, is organizing for 1989 a computer games olympics which will have a go event. And I understand that negotiations are underway with NEC about a tournament in Japan.

GW: Do you need a huge computer to make any progress?

DE: For the time being, no. The search trees

are so enormous that even a supercomputer isn't much help at exhaustive analysis. There seems to be no alternative to thinking. Nearly all the existing programs run on one or another microcomputer.

GW: What has been the reaction to *Computer Go*?

DE: It was a little slow in developing. But now there are more than 200 subscribers in 20 countries. The majority are in the USA, especially in California's Silicon Valley. But there are several subscribers in places you don't think of as

Go powerhouses, like Romania and El Salvador. I've enjoyed some of the correspondence it has provoked. It's increasingly serving its purpose of providing a focal point for the subject.

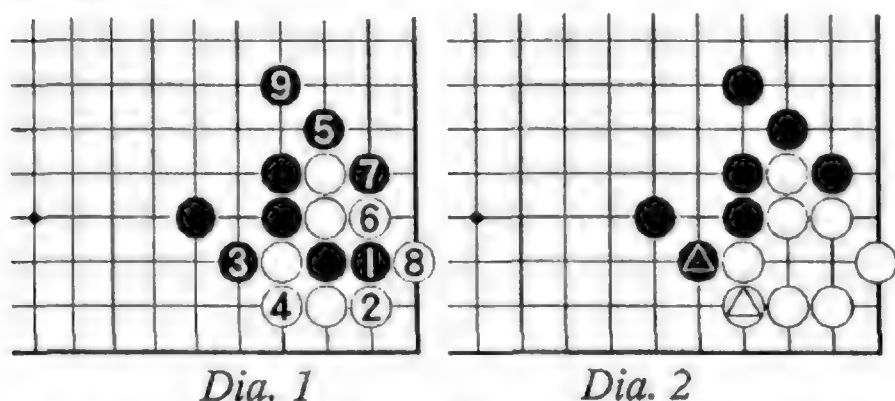
GW: How can someone subscribe to *Computer Go*?

DE: Write to me, at 71 Brixford Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2N 1E1, Canada. Subscriptions are C\$15 in Canada, USA\$15 in the USA and all other countries. There are back issues available for people who may be interested in a complete file.

36 Tesuji Patterns: Answers

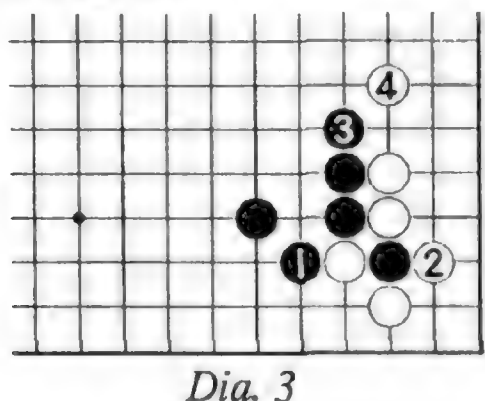
Answer to Problem 4

Dia. 1. This is a well-known sacrifice tesuji. Black 1 follows the proverb, 'increase the sacrifice to two stones'. White must play 2, so Black gets to make the atari at 3 and to force with 5 and 7.

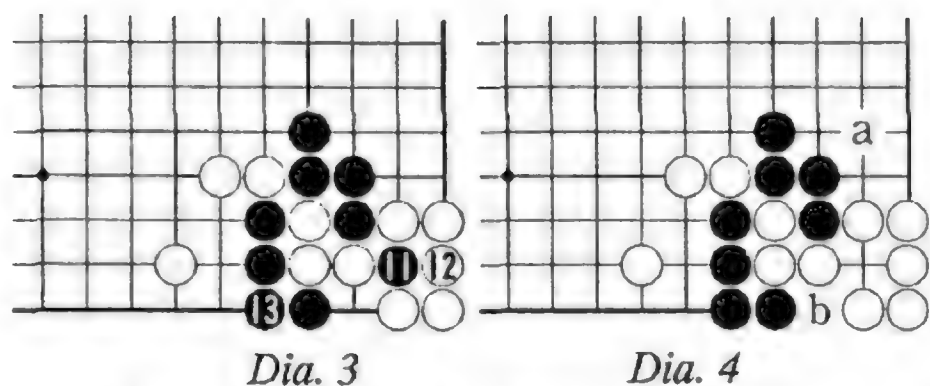
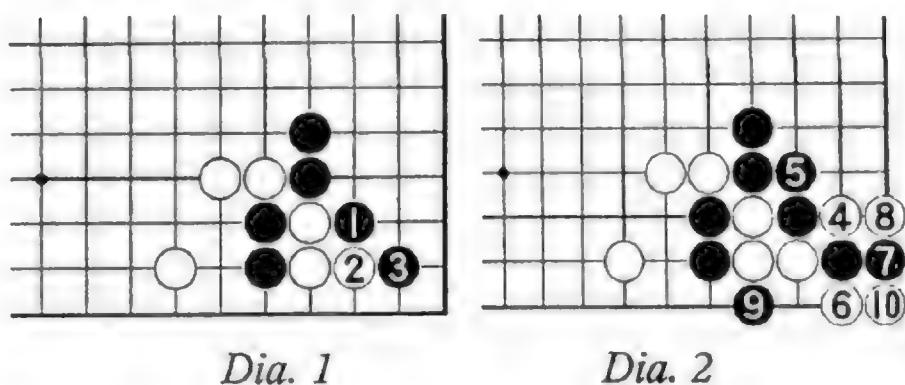


Dia. 2. This is the result. By increasing the sacrifice, Black has forced White to answer his marked stone with the marked white stone, which is now superfluous. Note, however, that some players avoid this whole joseki because White does get a lot of corner profit.

Dia. 3. Once Black has embarked on this joseki, he must play the corner sacrifice. If he ataris immediately at 1, White gets a much better result than in Dia. 1.



Dia. 2. If White 4, Black again makes a two-stone sacrifice. After 10 —

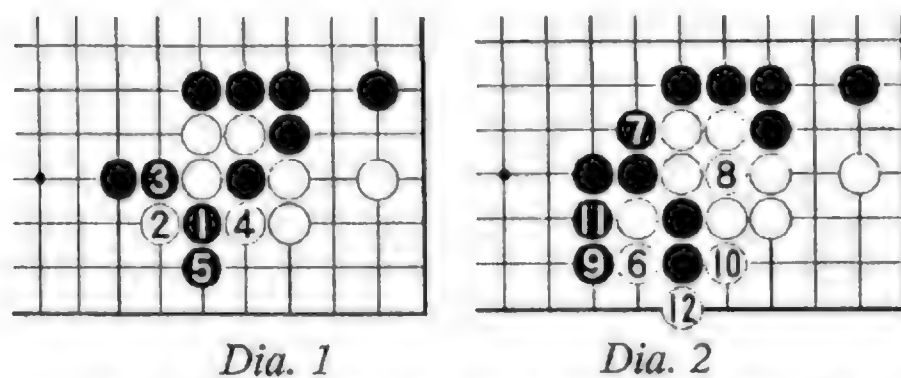


Dia. 3. He makes a throw-in at 11, then connects at 13. Next —

Dia. 4. If White jumps to 'a', he can save his stones on the edge, but when Black ataris at 'b' he can't connect his three stones. If instead White plays 'b', Black captures everything.

Answer to Problem 6

Dia. 1. Black 1 is a tesuji. If White tries to capture him with 2, Black intercepts at 3, then increases the sacrifice to two stones with 5. Next —

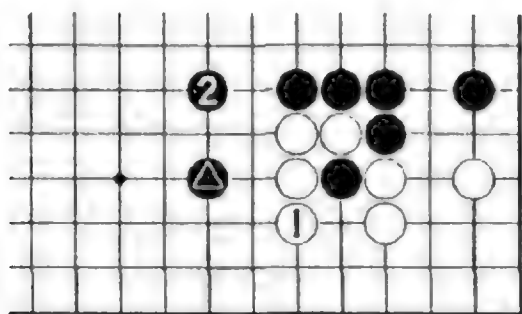


Dia. 2. White must block at 6, but then Black

Answer to Problem 5

Dia. 1. Each side has three liberties in this semeai. To win it, Black has to stop White from increasing his liberties. The only way to do this is to block with 1 and 3. Next —

squeezes in the centre with 7 and on the side with 9 and 11. He is more than satisfied.



Dia. 3

Dia. 3. When Black plays the marked stone, White must immediately descend at 1 to forestall the squeeze. Black will make thickness by defending at 2, but this result is reasonable for both sides.

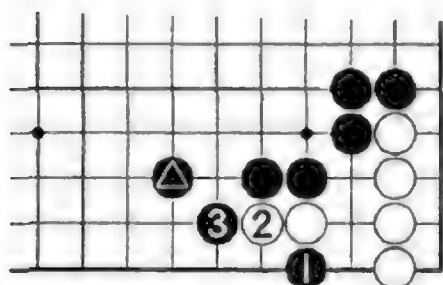
(‘Let’s Go’, February 1983)

36 Life and Death Patterns: Answers

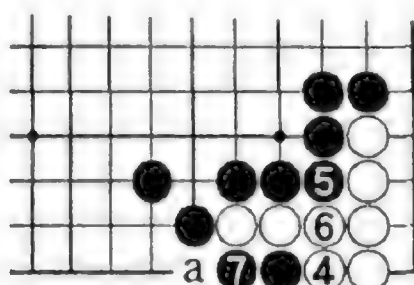
Answer to Problem 4

Dia. 1. Black 1 is a very hard move to think of if you have never seen this kind of tesuji before. It relies on the presence of the marked stone to work. If White 2, Black plays 3, but it is not yet obvious that White is dead.

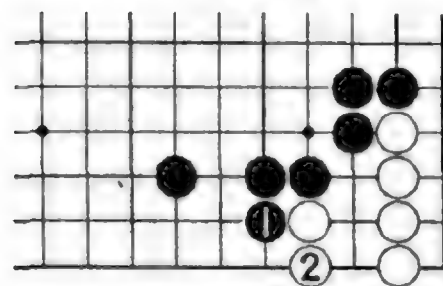
Dia. 2 If White resists with 4, Black must play 5; if White now captures at 7, Black makes this a false eye by pushing in at 6, but if White 6, Black still makes this a false eye by sacrificing two stones with 7. If next White ‘a’, Black throws in at 7.



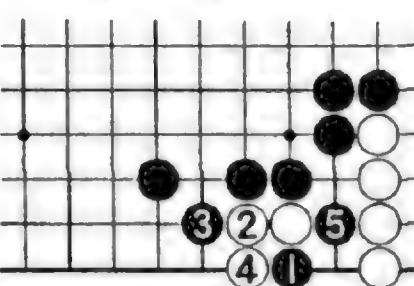
Dia. 1



Dia. 2



Dia. 3



Dia. 4

Dia. 3. Black 1 is hopeless: White easily makes an eye with 2. This proves that 2 is the vital point.

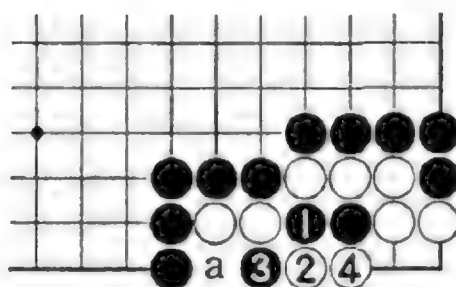
Dia. 4. If 4 here instead of 4 in Dia. 2, Black simply plays 5, making this a false eye.

Answer to Problem 5

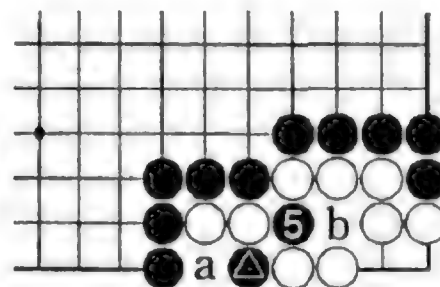
Dia. 1. Black 1 looks like suicide, but it ex-

ploits the weak point in White’s shape. White must capture with 2 or 4; in either case, Black ataris at 3, forcing White to capture with 4 or 2. Note that Black 3 at ‘a’ would be a mistake.

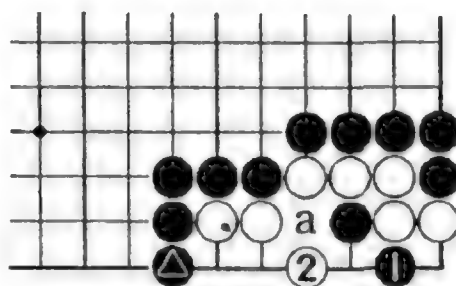
Dia. 2. The point of the sacrifice is to set up the deadly throw-in of 5. White can’t capture the marked stone with ‘a’, but if he plays ‘b’, Black ‘a’ destroys his eye.



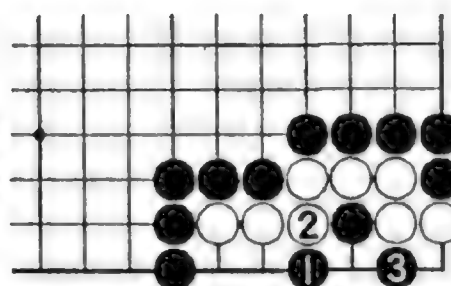
Dia. 1



Dia. 2



Dia. 3



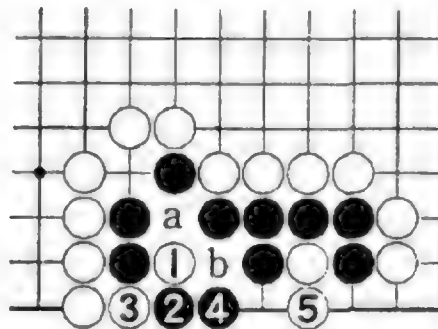
Dia. 4

Dia. 3. Black 1 fails to make use of the marked stone. White lives unconditionally with 2. He won’t be so silly as to play White ‘a’, letting Black get a ko with Black 2.

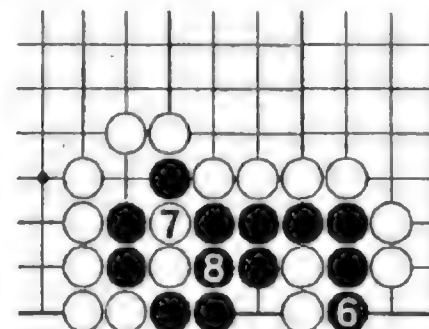
Dia. 4. If Black 1, White gets a ko. If White played 2 at 3, Black would play at 2 and White would be unable to atari.

Answer to Problem 6

Dia. 1. White attaches at 1, preventing Black from making eyes by playing at this point. If Black 2 at 3, then White ‘a’; if Black 2 at ‘a’, then White 3; if Black 2 at 5, then White 4 or ‘b’ is good enough. Black therefore has no choice but to play at 2. After White 3 and Black 4, it’s obvious that White 5 is the vital point. This makes miai of destroying the eye on the left and the one on the right and is the second tesuji. Next –



Dia. 1



Dia. 2

Dia. 2. If Black 6, White 7 is the third tesuji. After 8 –

Continued on page 72

The Magnificent Obsession: Sakata Eio and Go (2)

by Bob Terry

In this issue we present the story of the second half of the career of the legendary Sakata Eio, beginning with the encounter with Takagawa in the 1961 Honinbo title match that heralded the full flowering of his genius. This year saw the beginning of the 'Sakata age', in which he completely dominated professional go, setting records that remain unbroken to this day. The story continues with his epic clash with Fujisawa Shuko in the Meijin title, then proceeds to describe his rivalry with Rin Kaiho, the player who eventually dethroned him. Sakata closes his autobiography by summing up his career and giving some insight into the nature of his talent. By way of conclusion, we then give assessments of Sakata by some of the important figures in his career. (Ed.)

A Golden Year

When I became the challenger to Takagawa Honinbo, newspaper comments echoed a common theme: 'Few in the go world doubt that Sakata is the only player capable of dethroning Takagawa. And at last, after ten years, this long-anticipated confrontation is about to become a reality. Sakata has claimed for quite a while that in a head-on match with Takagawa he would win decisively; we eagerly await the outcome now that his words are going to be put to the test.'

As the Honinbo match approached, most observers agreed that Takagawa and I had equal chances of winning. In the words of one commentator, 'While Sakata possesses a more accomplished technique, Takagawa has more experience in important matches.'

I gave my own opinion in a magazine: 'I have compiled a good win/loss record against Takagawa, but since those wins came in other tournaments, they are meaningless. If I do not defeat him in the Honinbo tournament, I cannot claim that I have vanquished him. Takagawa plays a balanced, thick game which seems easily imitated but really defies imitation. He displays no weak points, no hint of vulnerability. However, unless something odd happens, I do not think I will lose.'

In the first game, Takagawa, playing white, made a terrible mistake which gave me a decisive advantage, but later on I returned the favor by playing an awful move myself, giving him the chance to get back into the game. Eventually, though, Takagawa committed another painful error, and I just managed to pull off a win.

With white in the next game, I engineered a long, drawn-out territorial struggle. Uncharacteristically, Takagawa played a bad move in the endgame to give me a win by one and a half points. It seems that he miscounted the board

and to the very last believed that he had won the game by half a point. For Takagawa, renowned for the precision of his play, this was a rare slip.



*Sakata Eio in a characteristic pose during a game
(a recent photo)*

I played a bad move in the opening of the third game and quickly found myself in a losing position. By the time the last move of the first day had been sealed, I despaired of saving the game. However, some supporters pointed out that 'Since the game is lost anyway, why not relax and see what can be gained by calm, stubborn resistance?' Sure enough, Takagawa made a mistake during the opening moves of the second day and then made matters worse by trying too hard and overplaying his position. That gave me a chance to mount an attack which resulted in a ko fight. An exchange of territories took place, but it was not until Takagawa committed one final mistake that the game was mine by half a point.

Takagawa won the fourth game decisively to avoid a shutout and bring the score in the match to 3-1 in my favor. That was the same lead I had

had ten years earlier against Hashimoto, but this time I knew I had things under control. Psychologically, I felt calm and collected: I was not upset by my failure to take the match four straight. I felt no anxiety: the maturity I had gained over the previous ten years was standing me in good stead.

Game Five was a seesaw affair, with Takagawa and myself trading bad moves with each other. Late in the middle game, Takagawa, playing white, staked everything on a do-or-die move, and I erred in my response. At that stage my position was slightly, but clearly, inferior. In the endgame we exchanged poor moves until the point was reached where Takagawa could have established a definite lead. It was here that he wavered and let the victory get away. In the end I was able to fill the last ko to earn my second half-point win of the series.

As soon as the game ended, the room filled with local go fans who had come to get a close-up view of the drama. The crowd was hushed as Takagawa and I sat exhausted and motionless. When we finally did speak to review the game, it was only for a short while. Then Takagawa, after nodding politely, staggered wearily to his feet amid the silence. Suddenly, as he started to make his way out of the room, the fans exploded in a burst of applause. I have never seen anything like it in any other title match. It was a spontaneous outpouring of appreciation by the crowd for Takagawa and his feat of holding the Honinbo title for nine consecutive terms.

I remained seated at the board, unable to get up. The thought slowly sank in that the title was finally in my possession.

Looking back now, the two half-point wins in the third and fifth games stand out in my mind for their series of excruciatingly difficult battles. In terms of content, these games were double-edged affairs, the results of which could have gone either way. My victory in both cases has to be put down to luck. Had Takagawa played more precisely, had he played a bit more skillfully at a few key points, I would probably have lost. The 4-1 final score suggests that I overwhelmed my opponent, but I could just as easily have been down 2-3 after the fifth game if Takagawa hadn't made all those mistakes. To be honest, neither player was definitely stronger than the other in this match; the element of luck played a greater role.

The next day I went straight home to Tokyo.

The train ride back seemed to last forever. I wanted to share my happiness with my father, and when I met him it was as if he were the one who had won the go world's highest honor, that's how happy and proud he was.

He died the next year at the age of 77. I wish that my parents could have lived a little longer to enjoy my success with me, but even so I felt glad that I fulfilled the ultimate filial obligation of my life by becoming Honinbo.

I chose Honinbo Eiju as the formal name by which I would be known while I held the title. There is an interesting story connected with this name. Traditionally, the Honinbo adopts a name that begins with the character *Shu* (meaning 'outstanding'). For instance, Takagawa combined it with his given name of Kaku to give Shukaku. In my case, however, the most natural combination would be 'Shuei', a name that I was unwilling to use out of deference to the great player of the past who was known by that name. 'Eishu' struck me as sounding ridiculous and I rejected Eisaku, another name I considered, because it seemed too similar to names from olden times.

My solution was to draw upon the names of two persons from the past who had exercised a strong influence on my life. Shusai Meijin, who had played such an inspiring role not only in my own life but in the go world as a whole, was named Tamura Hoju at birth; the reader may also recall the name of Tsushima Juichi from earlier in this narrative as the man whose inspiring leadership pulled the go world together in the darkest years after the war to reform the Nihon Ki-in. When I announced that I had adopted the name of 'Eiju', I heard criticism from some quarters that it sounded too elegant, even feminine. But the name had significance for me personally, Mr. Tsushima was pleased with my selection, and I couldn't think of any other that made as much sense.

A party was held in my honor at the Central Hall of the Nihon Ki-in, and another was arranged by Masubuchi Sensei's go group at the Tokyo Maritime Hall, but I had little time to enjoy the fruits of my labors. Right after the Honinbo match, I was slated to play Fujisawa Hosai in the Lightning Meijin Championship.

1961 was an unusual year in that I contested a number of title matches with Takagawa. Altogether, we played 16 games that year, which probably qualifies as some kind of record. After the Honinbo match, we met first in the Oza and

then in the Nihon Ki-in Number One Position title matches. Another odd coincidence was that after winning the Honinbo title for the first time by beating him, I won my first Oza title in the same way. The latter was my seventh title of this memorable year. Starting with the Strongest Player title at the beginning of the year, I captured the Top Position, the NHK Cup, the Nihon Ki-in Championship, the Honinbo, the Nihon Ki-in Number One Position, and the Oza titles. Perhaps the only player as weary as I from overexposure to the game was Takagawa.

Speaking of Takagawa, I genuinely consider him a past master of competitive match play. I realize that he has said the same of me, but in reality he, if anyone, deserves the distinction. Outwardly Takagawa appeared weak and fragile, yet his inner spirit was powerful and unyielding. I, on the other hand, am a creature of whims. For instance, the year after I won those seven titles, three of them from Takagawa, I suffered three straight defeats at his hands to relinquish my Nihon Ki-in Championship title for the first time in nine years. How can I explain this? Well, when I lose a game I have a tendency to lose my cool, to try to force matters. A loss lingers in my memory, goading me on to repeat the error. By the same token, when I am on a winning streak, I put everything I've got into my play and I rack up one win after another.

Takagawa was different. He was tough psychologically as few others are, and even now I have much to learn from that side of his personality. But he also possessed an unerring instinct for evaluating the true state of affairs throughout the board. He was perfectly willing to allow his opponent to take a key point on the board as long as he had the opportunity to take an equally good point. When the time came for middle-game fighting, Takagawa would not go out of his way to start a fight; in fact, as far as possible he would avoid fighting. Rather, he sought to draw out the game, confident in his endgame skills. Of course, at times he would find it expedient to abandon this passive strategy for the rough-and-tumble fighting natural to go, but he would only do so if the natural balance of the game had already been upset.

Where Takagawa really excelled was in his ability to defuse an opponent's natural fighting spirit. He approached the game dispassionately, determined not to provoke a confrontation. Most people instinctively defend themselves when

faced with imminent danger, but Takagawa, always cool and reserved, was never in a hurry to act. He counted on neutralizing his adversary's strengths and then letting him destroy himself through overeagerness. He encouraged his opponents to strike impulsively.

To the casual observer, Takagawa appeared to be a scholarly type, devoid of serious ambitions, but nothing could have been further from the truth. He was simply a realist. Compared to players like Fujisawa Shuko and myself, who rely on intuition to achieve success, Takagawa prepared much more comprehensively; he avoided the wild mood swings, the intuitive jabs, and concentrated on his own winning plan.

Game Nine. Sakata v. Takagawa 16th Honinbo Title, Game 5

This is the game which brought about the transition from the age of Takagawa to the age of Sakata.

White: Takagawa Honinbo

Black: Sakata Eio 9-dan

Komi: 4 1/2. Time: 10 hours each.

Played on 16, 17 June 1961 in Yonezawa City.

Figure 1 (1-70). *Black ahead*

White 40. White must counterattack; if he answers 39 at 45, the weak black group becomes a strong one after Black 'a', White 'b', Black 49. Still, Black goes ahead when he virtually secures the capture of 14 by blocking at 45. White tries to cut down his gain by attacking with 46.

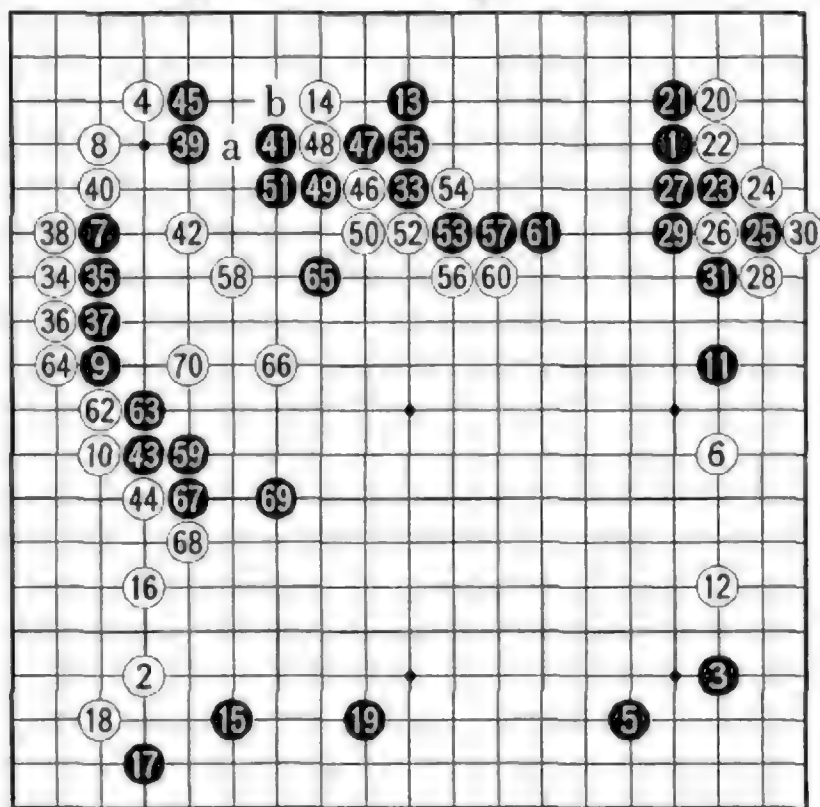


Figure 1 (1-70)

32: connects

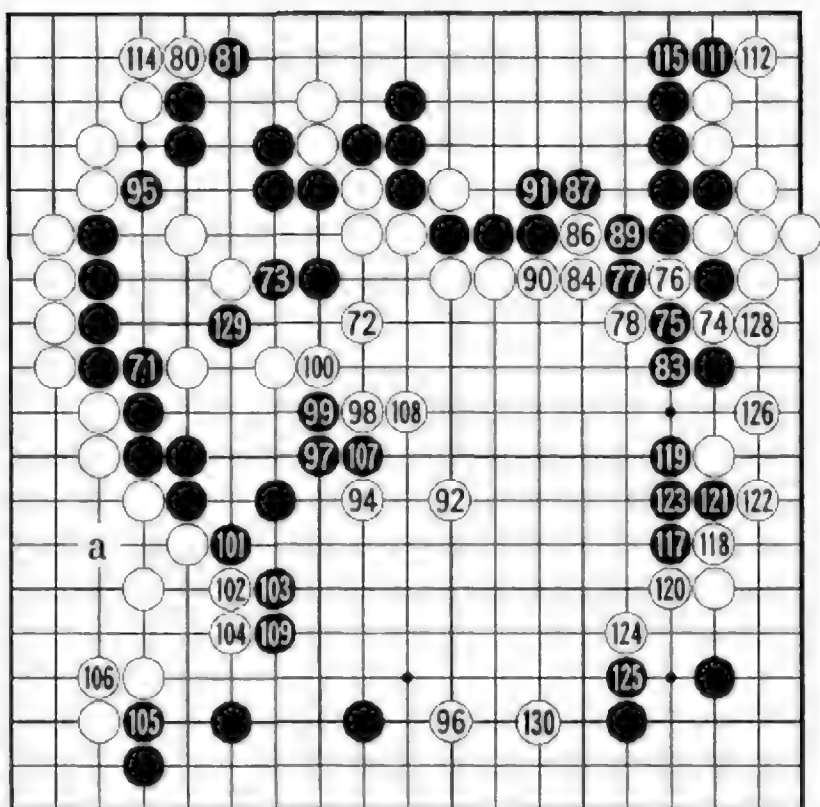


Figure 2 (71-130)

ko: 79, 82, 85, 88, 93, 110, 113, 116, 127

Figure 2 (71-130). A ko fight

White 78. Cutting here, rather than at 83, is very aggressive.

Black 93 is premature — 94 is the key point.

White 106. If omitted, Black peeps at 'a', then cuts at 106.

Figure 3 (131-200). The game becomes close.

White 32 is an attempt to shake Black's lead. White's aim is to squeeze the black group above.

Black 45. Better to make an eye with Black 'a', White 'b', Black 85, and so avoid the squeeze. When Black links up with 51, White 52 makes the game very close.

Black 97 is not immediately necessary: Black should play at 'c'.

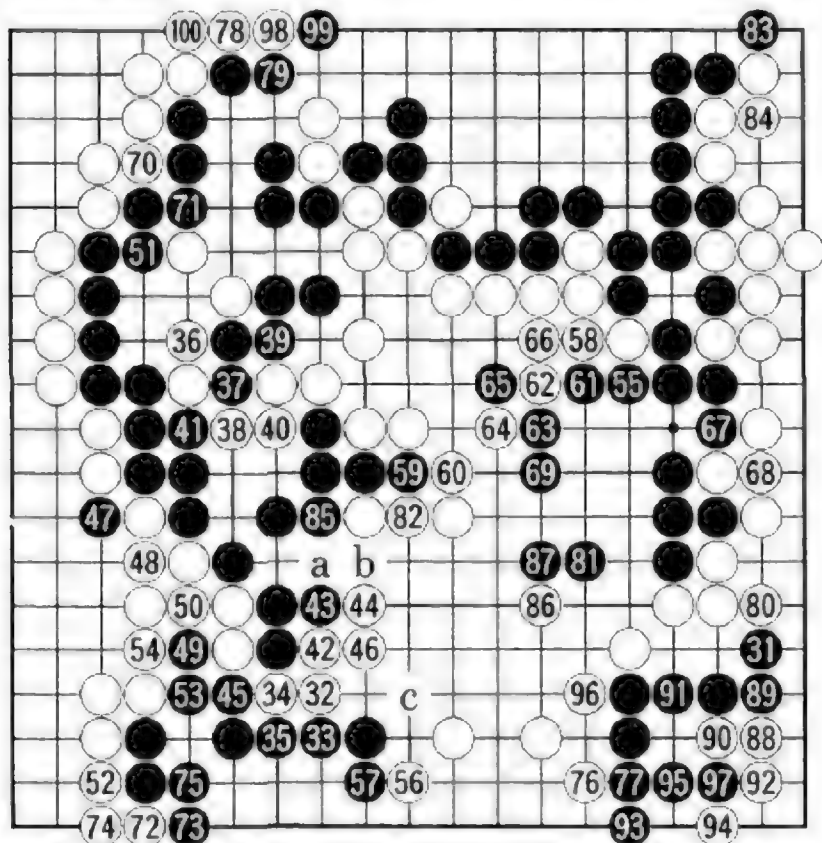


Figure 3 (131-200)

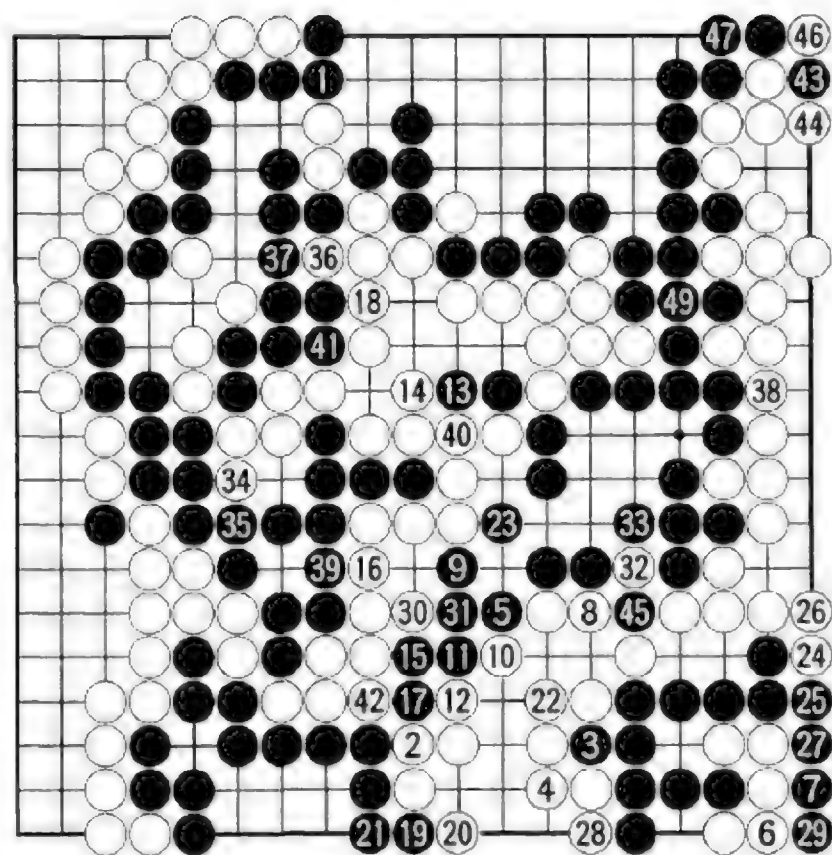


Figure 4 (201-251)

48: ko (at 32); 50: connects (at 45); 51: at 43. Black wins and connects the ko.

Figure 4 (201-251). The final mistake

Black 17 should be at 23, but White misses his chance to play 18 at 23 and win by half a point.

Black wins by half a point.

Sakata Meijin Honinbo

The first Meijin title of the modern era was launched in the same year, 1961. I do not know all the details, but it seems that Fujisawa Shuko, acting in the capacity of Director of the Public Relations department of the Nihon Ki-in, convinced the Yomiuri newspaper to sponsor the tournament. Kitani 9-dan was opposed to the idea, because he felt that the Meijin of any era should be recognized as the strongest player by general consensus and designated such by acclamation. However, the rest of the Nihon Ki-in was overwhelmingly in favor of the tournament, so he had no choice but to go along. (See GW21 for more information on this tournament.)

The thirteen strongest players of the day were selected to play round-robin games against each other, with the overall winner to be crowned Meijin. The following year that number would then be pared to nine, who would form a league to determine the challenger for the title. One provision in the rules turned out to have a profound effect on the final result of the 1st Meijin tournament: komi was set at five points, with a drawn game (jigo) being awarded to White. However, a win by jigo did not rate as highly as a straightout win, nor was Black's defeat

counted as low as an ordinary loss.

It took a year and a half to complete that first 13-player tournament. As we went into the final round, the battle for the title of Meijin had become a struggle among three players: Fujisawa Shuko, with a record of nine wins and two losses, and Go Seigen and myself, who had both scored eight wins and three losses. If Shuko won his last game, his score of 10-2 would give him the title, but if he lost he would be forced into a playoff with the winner of the game between Go and me.

I played black that day and by the middle of the game I had taken the lead. But Go started a ko fight, followed by a number of do-or-die plays which resulted in strange, complex developments. I suppose that I viewed matters too optimistically, because I began to play conservatively; I wanted to nurse the advantage I had built up from the opening. Instead, I wound up playing one slack move after another. Finally, I let my last chance in the endgame slip away, and the final result was jigo: a drawn game.

Go and I were told after our game that Shuko had indeed been defeated earlier, but hearing that only served to pour salt onto our wounds, for we realized that the jigo decision had cost us our chances of meeting Shuko in a playoff game. The jigo stipulation in the rules meant not only that I, the loser of the game, lost my chance to meet Fujisawa in a playoff but that Go was also put out of contention. His 9-3 score was not as good as Shuko's.

Shuko, who had already resigned himself to the prospect of a playoff, had left the site of his defeat earlier to console himself in the pleasure districts of Tokyo. Once the true state of affairs became clear, reporters from the Yomiuri set off in a frantic search for the new Meijin. However, it was not until one o'clock in the morning that they finally tracked him down at his house to tell him the news.

Kido magazine published a picture of my game with Go Seigen with the caption, 'Unfortunate adversaries knock each other out.' But other magazines and newspapers celebrated Shuko's stroke of luck by writing: 'Lady Luck delivers the Meijin title on a silver platter.' However one looks at it, it was an unforgettable event; that's certainly what it was for me. I developed a burning desire to capture the Meijin title from my rival and establish my preeminence.

I would like to pause here to describe one of my favorite pastimes: drinking. My father never

Sakata's Career (5)

1967: 22nd Honinbo: defeated Rin 4-1. Loss to Rin in the match ended Sakata's record winning streak here at 17. Lost to Rin 1-4 in the 6th Meijin title match. Defeated Fujisawa Hosai 3-2 for the 6th Judan title. Lost to Otake 1-2 in the 6th Nihon Ki-in No. 1 Position title.

1968: 23rd Honinbo: lost to Rin 3-4. Defeated Fujisawa Shuko 3-1 for the 7th Judan title. Lost to Fujisawa Shuko 1-2 in the 5th Pro Best Ten title. Lost to Fujisawa Shuko 0-2 in the 16th Oza title.

1969: Lost to Otake 0-3 in the 8th Judan title. Defeated Rin 2-0 in the 6th Pro Best Ten title.

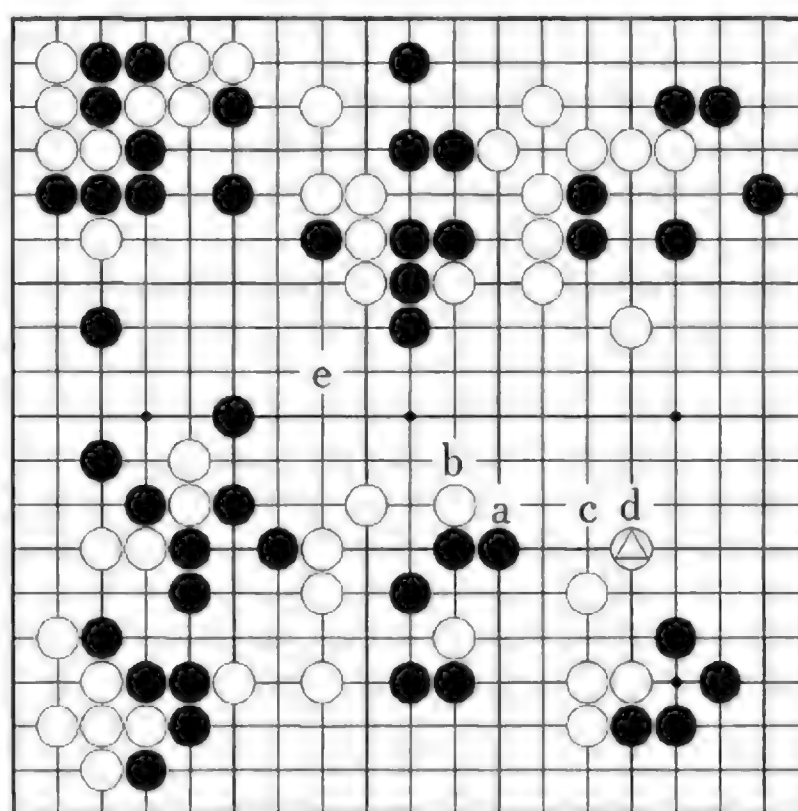
1970: 25th Honinbo: lost to Rin 0-4. Defeated Fujisawa Shuko 2-0 for the 18th Oza title. Lost 17th NHK Cup to Rin.

1971: Defeated Hashimoto Shoji for the 19th Oza title.

1972: Defeated Hashimoto Uтарo 3-2 for the 10th Judan title. Defeated Ohira 3-1 in the 20th Nihon Ki-in Ch'ship. Defeated Hashimoto Uтарo 2-1 for the 20th Oza title. Won the 19th NHK Cup, defeating Otake. Awarded the 10th Shusai Prize.

1973: Defeated Takagi Shoichi 3-0 for the 11th Judan title. Lost 21st Oza title to Rin 1-2. Defeated Kato Masao 3-2 in the 21st Nihon Ki-in Ch'ship.

Continued on page 49

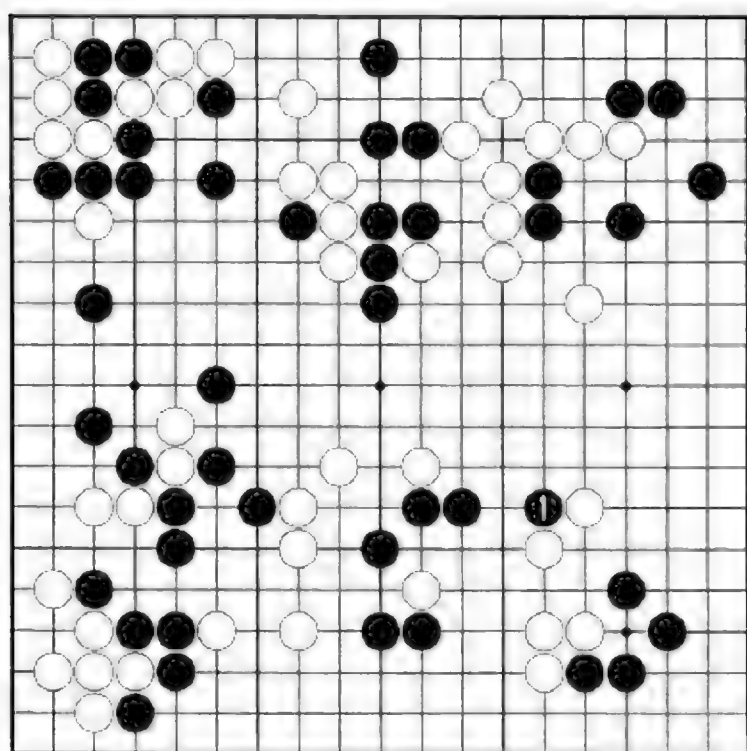


Problem 4

Black to play. White has just played the marked stone. If Black plays 'a', White 'b', Black 'c', then White 'd' or 'e' means trouble for Black's groups above and below.

Answer on page 48

Answer to Problem 4



Dia. 1

*Sakata v. Go Seigen
1st Meijin League (1961)*

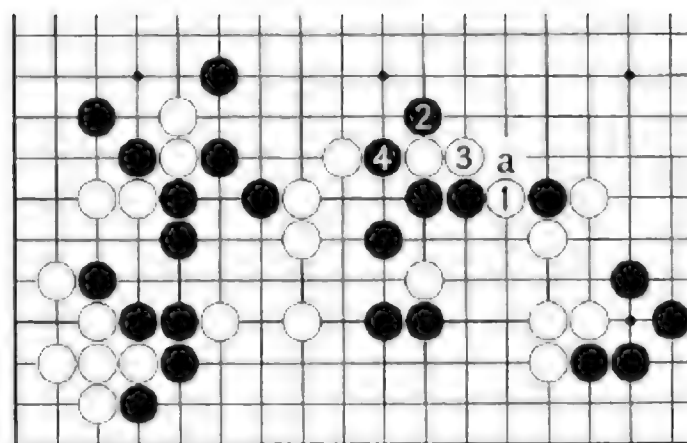
Sakata comments in one of his game collections that the reader might wonder if Black 1 in Dia. 1 is not a misprint. If White ataris at 1 in Dia. 2, Black 2 and 4 set up a double atari at 'a'.

drank, and when I was young conditions in Japan were not suitable for fun-loving buddies to go bar-hopping. But as pressure started mounting in my professional life, I started drinking to relieve the tension. On the night before a game I would have a drink in order to sleep instead of taking a sleeping pill. As I entered my forties, I found that my capacity for liquor expanded greatly. Sometimes I myself marvel at the amount of alcohol my liver can absorb, but I have never once suffered a hangover.

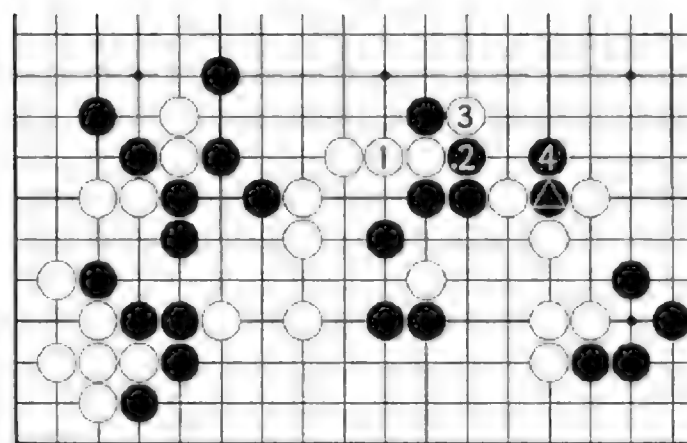
After some time I grew to enjoy the camaraderie I found in the night clubs I visited. Now the reader must not assume that my partners in these nightly forays were my fellow go players; I was never close to others in my profession, undoubtedly because of my independent spirit. Instead I found companionship amidst the journalists and men of letters who were intrigued with the world of match play.

It all started when I became Honinbo. *Igo Club* arranged a series of instructional games between me and leading literary figures of the day. After the games these writers would write an account of the experience for the magazine. Everyone involved enjoyed the articles and they led to a boom in go playing in the literary world.

After one of these games I was invited to go



Dia. 2



Dia. 3

The marked stone in Dia. 3 also proves useful in enabling Black to extricate himself in the most favorable way.

to the Ginza district of Tokyo by the writer and his friends. It turned out that he was the same age as I and we hit it off right away. Go players and writers already have a great deal in common, since those who make their living in the two professions tend to be lone wolves who have no other source of strength to draw upon but their own creativity and stamina. On top of that I found that many of these writers shared my own distaste for servile behaviour before anyone, no matter how important or well-connected.

Then, too, the women in the Ginza clubs were beautiful, elegant creatures perfectly designed to captivate the soul of an innocent fellow like me. I'd never seen such a display of beauties, from one club to another as we made the rounds of the best night spots of Tokyo. To a man like myself, so easily enamored of the fair sex, the Ginza was a dream come true. It wasn't long before I began visiting the district alone; in fact, during 1963 and 1964 I spent several nights every week there, sometimes four nights straight. When I look back on those days I am struck by the manner in which the depth and breadth of my skill at go were influenced and enhanced by the diversity of experiences I underwent as I explored the night life of Tokyo. And I can truly say that my skills were not undermined in any way by

these sojourns after hours.

The second Meijin league in 1963 developed into a race between Go Seigen and me. Go had been hit by a motorcycle and hospitalized just as the tournament began and was forced to default his first game. Even so, after he had recovered sufficiently to begin playing again he racked up one win after another until his record of five wins and two losses was second only to my 6-1 score. The right to challenge Fujisawa Shuko for the title hinged on the final game between us. If I lost we would both have 6-2 records, but the rules of the tournament specified that in the case of a tie the player with the higher position in the previous league would be declared the winner. That jigo loss from the year before was still haunting me.

As it turned out, Go Seigen uncharacteristically played a mediocre game and I won easily.

Game Ten: Sakata v. Go Seigen (2nd Meijin League)

White: Go Seigen 9-dan

Black: Sakata Eiju Honinbo

Played at the Fukudaya Inn in Yotsuya, Tokyo, in September 1963.

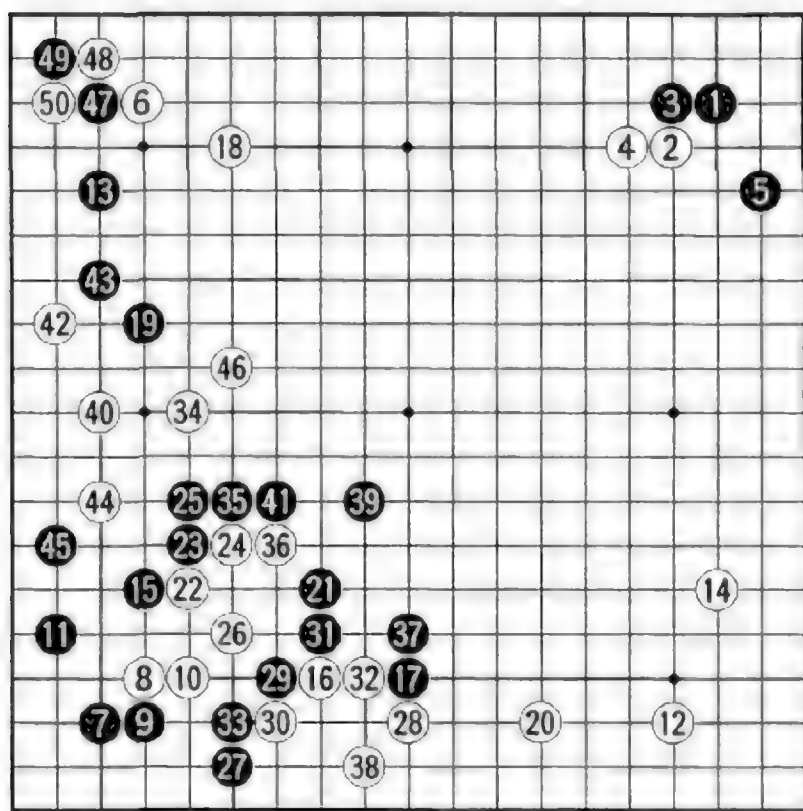


Figure 1 (1-50)

Figure 1 (1-50)

This game can perhaps be considered as marking the transition from the age of Go Seigen to the age of Sakata. It starts with a strange fuseki. Go attacks the two 3-3 stones immediately, but the later fuseki is a failure for him. First, Black 17 is a severe move. Then, with 18 it would be better to make a pincer at 19, as Black 19

Sakata's Career (6)

1974: Lost 12th Judan title to Hashimoto Shoji 1-3. Defeated Cho Chikun 3-2 in 22nd Nihon Ki-in Ch'ship.

1975: 30th Honinbo: lost to Ishida Yoshio 3-4.

1976: Won 2nd Japan Series. Defeated Go Seigen for 23rd NHK Cup. Lost 8th Lightning Go Ch'ship to Rin. Assumed position of Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Nihon Ki-in.

1977: Defeated Takemiya Masaki for the 24th NHK Cup. Lost 15th Judan title to Kato 0-3.

1978: Won second stage of the 3rd Kisei title.

1979: Lost 4th Meijin title to Otake 1-4. Defeated Fujisawa Shuko for the 1st JAA Cup.

1980: Defeated Ishida Yoshio for the 2nd JAA Cup. Won the 9-dan final of the 5th Kisei title.

1981: Defeated Kato 2-1 for the 13th Lightning Go Ch'ship. Lost 3rd JAA Cup to Otake.

1982: Defeated Sugiuchi for the 29th NHK Cup.

1983: Defeated Sakai Takeshi for the 2nd NEC Cup.

1984: Lost the 3rd NEC Cup to Cho Chikun. Complete games published in 6 volumes.

Sakata has not only won a record 64 titles but also made a record of 59 appearances in league play, including Meijin, Honinbo, Top Position and Strongest Player Leagues. He has also contested 17 best-of-seven title matches and has won the Oteai 6 times.

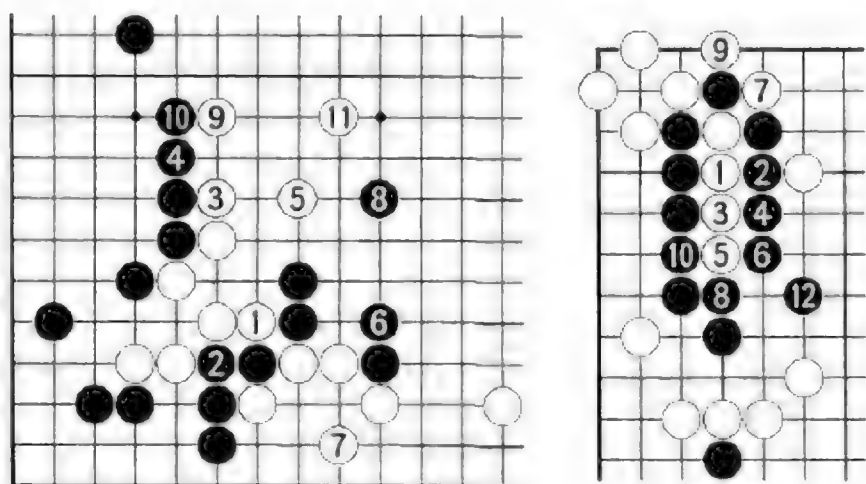


(Drawing of Sakata by Ito Tansui)

makes perfect balance with 15 (the reason why the balance is so good is that if White invades between 15 and 19, he will have no room to make a two-space extension along the side, so his invading stone will be weak).

Black 21 is also very severe. White is forced to move out with moves that help Black to build up his left side.

White 34 is the losing move. Even though it helps Black to secure territory, White should move out as in *Dia. 1*. The sacrifice up to 39 is too big.



Dia. 1

Dia. 2

11: connects

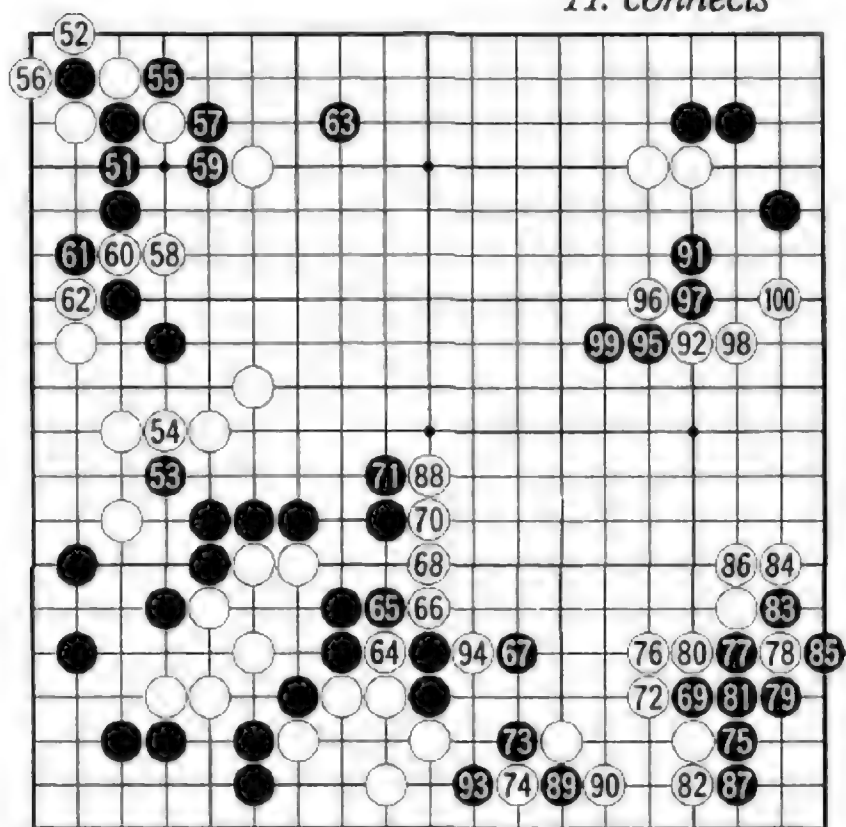


Figure 2 (51-100)

Figure 2 (51-100)

Black 57. This is not a ladder, but if White pulls his stone out, Black gets a squeeze, shown in *Dia. 2*.

White 64, 66. This is White's only chance, but Black skillfully parries the attack.

Figure 3 (101-173)

This game was one of Sakata's best wins against Go Seigen.

White resigns after Black 173.

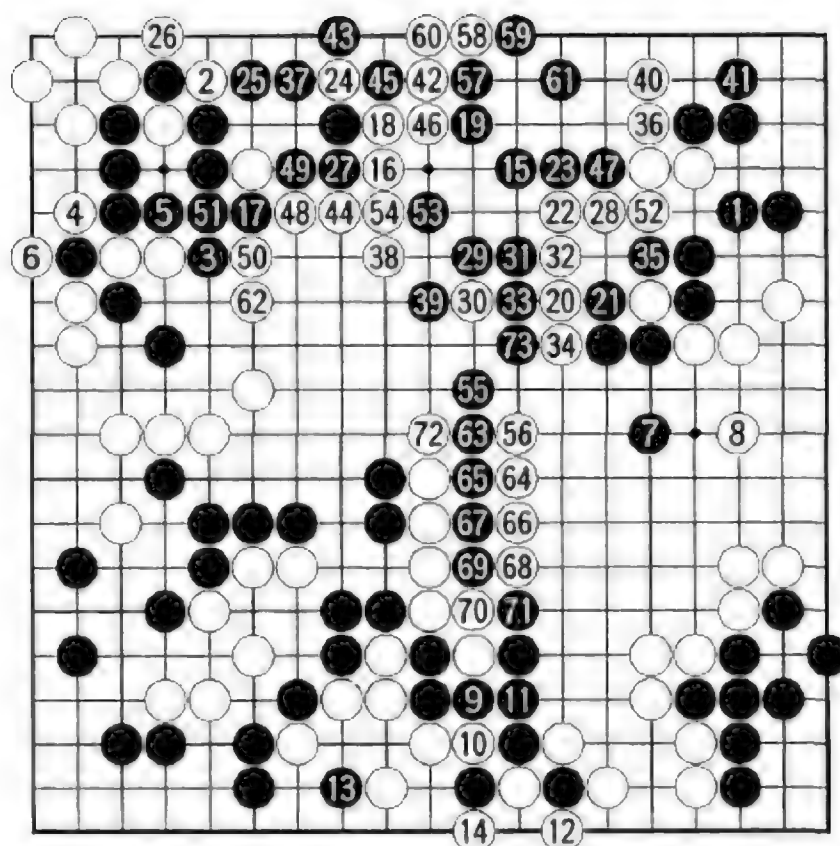


Figure 3 (101-173)

Before the start of the title match, opinion in the go world was divided equally as to whether Fujisawa's daring would prevail over my technical skill. The sparring between us began before the match itself as we each made demands of the sponsoring Yomiuri newspaper. I asked that no relatives of his, such as Fujisawa Hosai, be permitted to officiate at any game. Fujisawa asked that no photographs be taken of him while a game was in progress. It was around this time that he became famous for his distaste for having his picture taken. And we both asked that no supporter of either party enter the playing room. On top of that, it was decided that only bona fide members of the Nihon Ki-in's officiating group be allowed to enter the room.

The jousting between Fujisawa and myself would continue after a game as well. At times our discussions became quite heated. He would say that if he had played this move over here he would have gotten the advantage and I would contradict him by saying that I had anticipated that and had planned this counter move. It was said of us, 'The way those two discuss a game you would think they are really fighting.' But that is just an onlooker's opinion; neither Fujisawa nor I harbored any ill-feeling towards the other.

I won the first two games and believed that I had the whole thing wrapped up, but Fujisawa mounted a spirited counterattack. He won the next three games and I despaired of getting back into the match. My head was reeling. I felt lost, despondent. I wondered if I would lose four games straight and leave an indelible blot on my

30-year career. I was in a quasi-neurotic condition. I shut myself up in my study at home and just sat there, dazed. I lost my appetite and I didn't even feel like visiting my favorite haunts in the Ginza to brighten my spirits. This is how I become when my nerves are frazzled.

Then I did a funny thing. Casually, almost unconsciously, I picked up a few books from the shelves in my study and started to leaf through them. They were collections of games by Genjo, Chitoku, Jowa, Shuwa, Shusaku, etc. — all of the great players of the past. I began to play the games out on a board. As I have said before, this was unusual for me; I rarely studied books. In fact, my wife laughed at me when she saw that after all these years I was sitting down to scrutinize a go book.

I was not trying to find new moves to play, since the level of technique had advanced greatly between the past and modern times. But ignoring the questionable moves in the opening, the games from the old days featured some truly grand battles. I realized something else: the players of the past fought much more intensely than those of today. The fortunes of the hereditary houses to which they belonged depended upon the wins of those masters for their survival. There is a world of difference between that kind of responsibility and that of today's players, who are fighting only for money and personal pride. As I played out the games I experienced a palpable sensation of the stately dignity with which their moves were made.

I was in a desperate situation, but it made no sense to lose my head and play unreasonably. Whatever happened, I decided to play to the best of my ability, to play a game that I would be proud of and not regret afterwards. If I lost, fine; I had lost but I had remained true to myself.

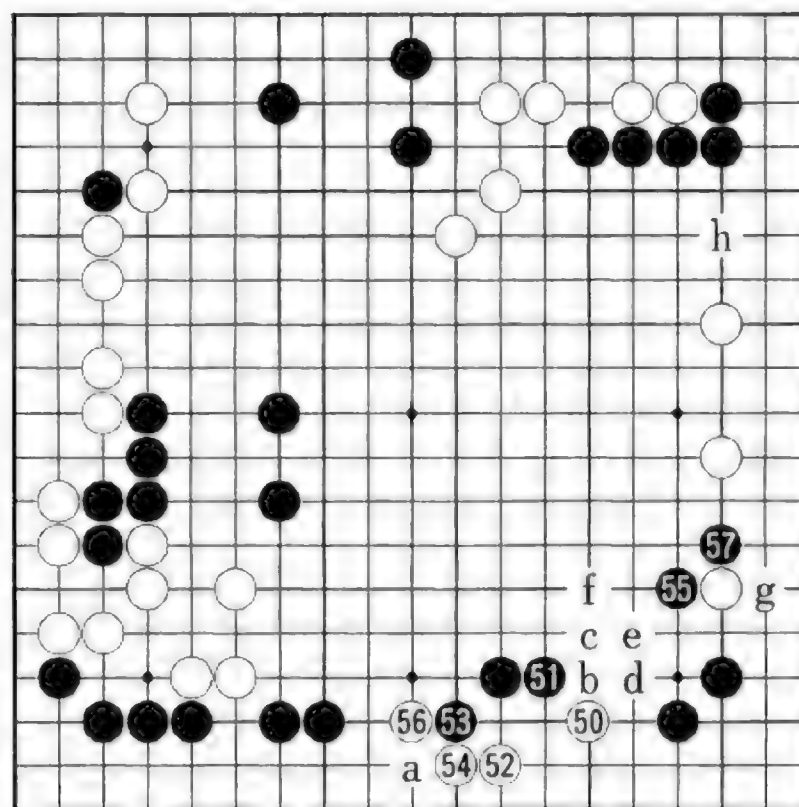
These thoughts calmed my spirit and all at once the world seemed a brighter place.

A few days later some other players heard of what I had done and made fun of me, saying, 'It's odd that you have suddenly started studying go.' I answered, 'I needed to refresh my spirit. It's the same as reading the Bible in order to cultivate one's soul. There's little chance that I could instantly get stronger by studying the classic games.'

On the day of the sixth game I approached the board calm and clear-headed, having brushed aside all thoughts of the previous three losses. Both sides placed stones on the third and fourth lines, aiming at a drawn-out contest. When the

time came for sealing a move at the end of the day an exciting scene occurred.

I must preface this story by saying that I do not like to seal a move myself. I will often place a stone on the board just before the adjournment and let my adversary seal a move. I did exactly that during this game, which is shown below. I played White 50, the only move in this situation. After Fujisawa answered at 51 I spent more than an hour considering my move. That left just two minutes before the 5:30 evening break for the day. At that point I played White 52 and Fujisawa, who undoubtedly had been convinced that I would be the one to seal a move, was taken aback. With an indignant look, he grabbed a stone and slapped Black 53 onto the board. In no time at all I played White 54. Fujisawa folded his arms in silent fury and studied the board. Right then the official observer informed him that the time had come to end the first day's play and after a short while Fujisawa sealed Black 55. Instead of this, Black could have blocked at 'a', which White would answer at 'b'. After Black 'c', White 'd', Black 55, White 'e', Black 57, White 'f', Black 'g', and White 'h', a different game would have resulted.



My strategy for dealing with the sealed-move question was a success, but in the seventh and final game, Fujisawa pulled the same trick on me. It is the kind of thrilling give-and-take that opponents often use to throw each other off balance.

Despite Fujisawa's displeasure at being fooled about the sealed move, I got the impression that he was pleased with the way the game

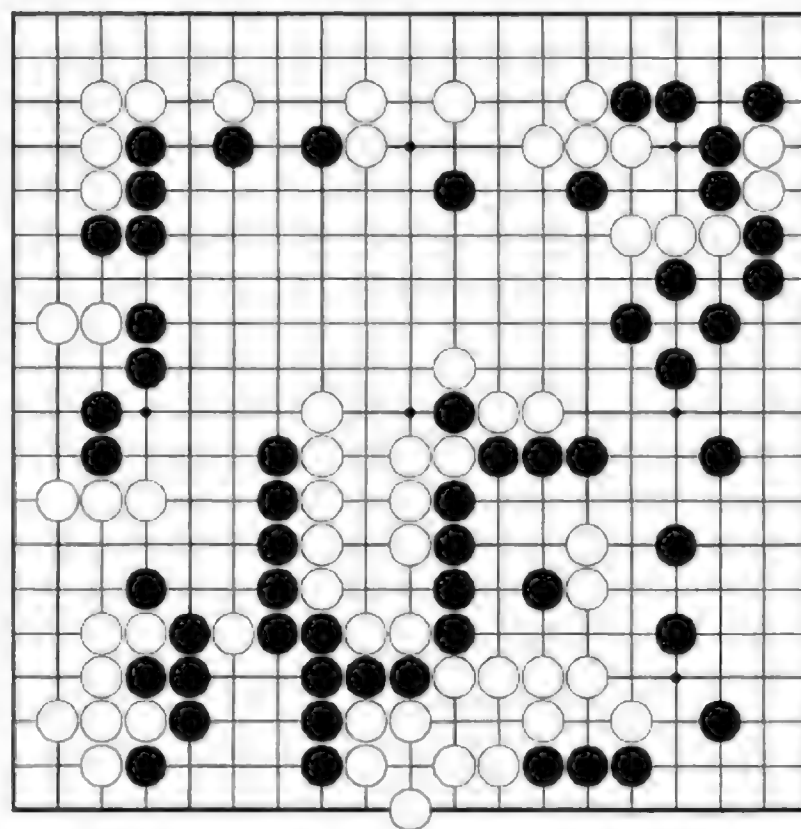


One of the most important victories of Sakata's career: he begins his fightback by defeating Fujisawa Shuko in the 6th game of the 1963 title match.

was unfolding. Black had a weak white group on the lower side to attack and White had thin positions throughout the board. I can picture him snoozing snugly in his bed that night and mumbling in his sleep: 'The win is mine for the taking.' Perhaps this kind of self-complacency undermined the incisive attacking style he had displayed previously, much as my own attitude towards the Honinbo match with Hashimoto in 1951 had led to my defeat.

Whatever the reason, I won the game and I was immensely relieved to have avoided the defeat that would have been my fourth in a row. The stage was now set for a dramatic confrontation in the seventh and final game. The go world buzzed in anticipation of the outcome of the match.

I played white again in the deciding game. The position quickly became complicated, with the fighting moving first to the upper right, then the upper side and yet again to the left side. At the end of the middle game I played a move which may have been the most notable of the match; it might even be considered the deciding blow that won the Meijin title for me.



Game 7, 2nd Meijin Title (1963)

White to play

In this position Sakata came up with what may be the most memorable move of his career. The problem here is how White should play in the upper left quarter of the board. (Answer on page 54)

And yet not one of the professional players observing the game, including Go Seigen, suspected that there was anything special about the move. In fact, Fujisawa himself when I played the move was grateful that I had done so: he considered it advantageous for Black. From my point of view it was simply a sensible way to strengthen White's center.

I consider my victory in this game to be the most memorable of my career. Far from surrendering to ignominious defeat, I had staged a remarkable recovery. In recent times both Rin Kaiho and Cho Chikun have engineered miraculous upsets, but it was rare in those days. The most recent occurrence of anything similar had been, ironically enough, my own failure to win the Honinbo title twelve years earlier after leading 3-1. I finally understood the calm resignation Hashimoto felt when he declared that he had 'washed his neck for the executioner.' One of life's great questions is how a person deals with a crisis. It is not always necessary to leap headlong into the unknown with tremendous daring. Sometimes quiet self-possession accomplishes more. I had become Meijin-Honinbo, the first of the modern era of title matches. I was at the top of the go world and at the top of my form.

Unbeatable

In order to commemorate my victory, *Igo Club* magazine once again arranged a series of games between leading authors and myself. This led to an even deeper involvement for me with the literary world. One of these authors was the late Nobel Prize-winner, Kawabata Yasunari. Besides his most famous works such as *Snow Country* and *A Thousand Cranes*, Kawabata also wrote two books about go players. *Go Seigen: Conversations about Go* is out of print, but his book *Meijin*, translated as *The Master of Go*, which describes Honinbo Shusai's retirement game against Kitani, is quite famous.

During the Meijin match Ezaki Masanori, an author and well-known go writer, had brought Kawabata to the inn in Tokyo where we were playing and rekindled his interest in go. Thus he became one of my opponents in the magazine series. In fact, we played the game at that same inn.

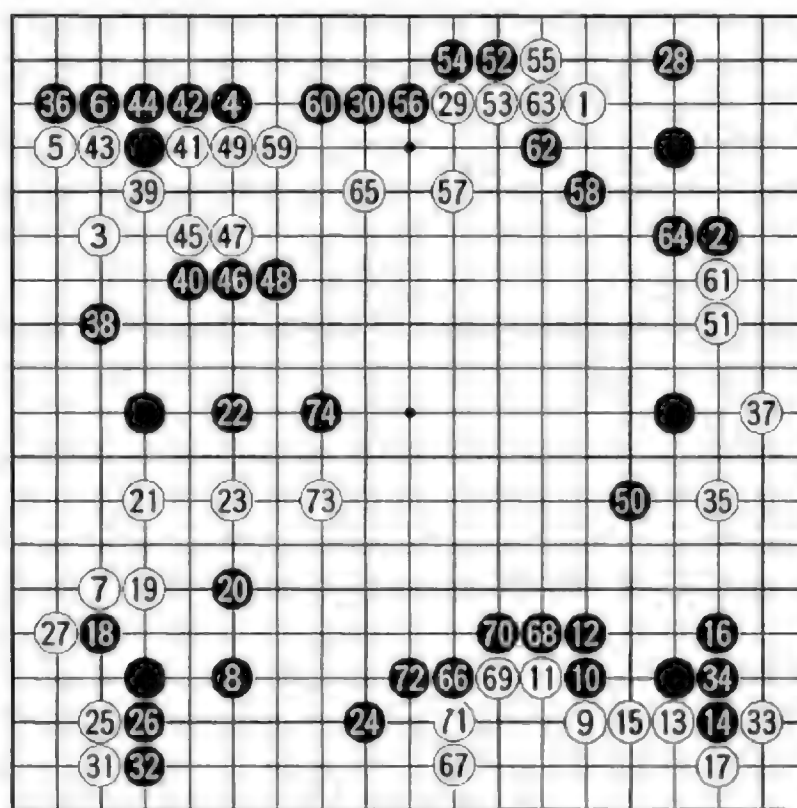
All of my other opponents played with a five-stone handicap, but Kawabata insisted on receiving six. He played without making any fancy moves, a rock-solid game that gave White no

chance to create complications. In the end he won by 6 1/2 points. I might add that he was the only one in the series to win a game against me.

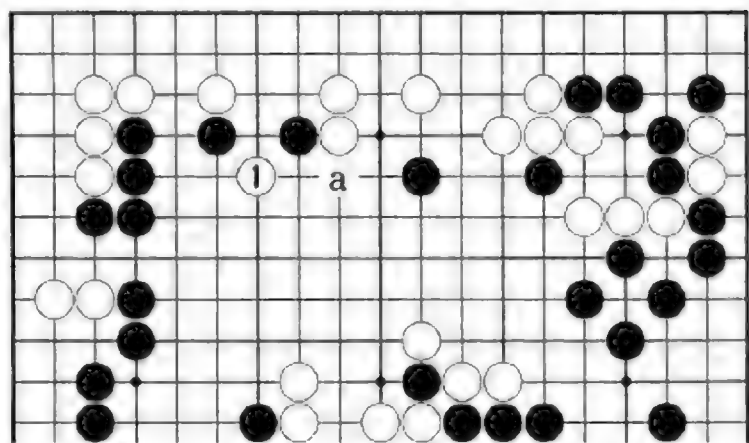
Afterwards Kawabata treated me and some other authors who had dropped by to watch our game to an evening of bar-hopping in the Ginza. We went from one luxurious club to another where Kawabata would simply sign the check. However, he himself drank nothing but lemon spritzer, no alcohol at all. Kawabata could be frighteningly serious at times, with penetrating eyes that flashed with intelligence. He even viewed his leisure time as a quest for self-understanding: the night life he experienced in the Ginza became the basis for his book *Sleeping Beauties*. I often saw the hostess he used as a model for the main character of the story in the bars I visited.



With Kawabata Yasunari



Kawabata (6 stones) v. Sakata
Moves after 74 omitted.



Dia. 1

Answer to problem on page 52

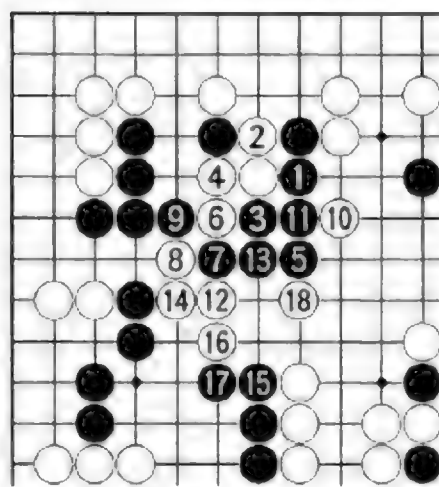
Dia. 1. White plays 1 to prevent Black from building up thickness in the center with a hane at 'a'. The reason why this move is a blindspot is that peeping from the outside, that is, from the center, is usually bad.

The next year the Shusai Prize was established and Kawabata was named as one of the four members of the selection committee. This prize was designed both as a means to perpetuate the memory of Honinbo Shusai and to recognize the achievements of the best player of the previous year. I am proud to say that I was chosen to be the first recipient, apparently as acknowledgement that by winning both the Honinbo and Meijin titles I had established my supremacy in the go world. I was so moved by the award ceremony that immediately afterwards I visited Honinbo Shusai's grave in the Sugamo district of Tokyo to pay my respects.

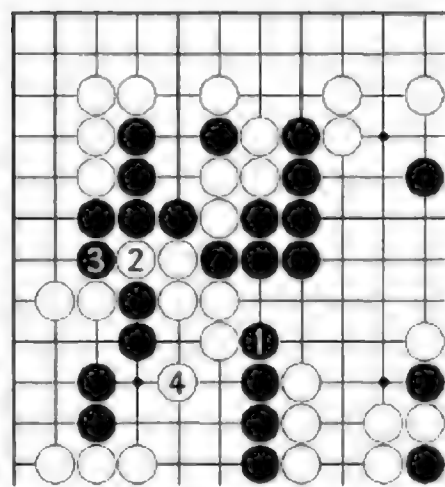
This was a fitting start for the new year, for while 1963 had been filled with honor and triumph, the upcoming year and a half proved to be the pinnacle of my professional career.

The first title I won in 1964 was the 11th Nihon Ki-in Championship, which Takagawa had taken from me two years previously. This gave me my fifth title: I had already won the Meijin, Honinbo, Oza, and Nihon Ki-in Number One titles.

In March I won the 11th NHK Cup, which was shown on television for the first time. The ten preceding tournaments were broadcast over the NHK radio network. I worked hard to defeat Fujisawa Shuko in the final, since he was a leading candidate to become challenger for my Meijin title and this game could prove to be an early skirmish of the main battle later on. One of the most memorable events of my life also took



Dia. 2



Dia. 3

Dia. 2. If Black tries to counterattack with 1, White crushes him with 2 to 18. Instead of 17 —

Dia. 3. If Black plays 1, he loses his four stones on the left side.

place in March. The Nihon Ki-in and the Shusai Society hosted a congratulatory party for me at the Yomiuri Hall in Yurakucho. Besides the professional players and dignitaries who attended the function, 1500 fans crowded in to see the ceremony which was billed as the 'Sakata Honinbo-Meijin Party'.

Several people made speeches in my honor. Some spoke of my childhood, others of the present time. Shimamura 9-dan amused the audience by describing my personality as an individual: 'When Sakata drinks and gets tipsy he is as artless as a child. That is a carry-over from his innocent nature, but it is interesting to watch him when we go drinking together in the Ginza or elsewhere. He has often said to me, "The cute girl at the bar there; she's crazy about me." But he will never ever say that he is crazy about some girl.'

Kawabata Yasunari stood up and made the following remarks: 'It may be truly said of contemporary go that we have entered the "Sakata Era". Sakata is considered the supreme exponent of the game today. He cuts a dashing figure, inspiring both amateur players like myself who love go and those who simply know him as a man and a friend. But the reason for this respect is not just Sakata's strength, his startling string of victories or the titles he has won. It is also due to the fascinating character of his play. Sakata's go is permeated with genius and splendid technique. These words of mine may seem hackneyed, but I say them with absolute sincerity. Even to an

amateur's eye like mine, Sakata's go is striking in its brilliance, sparkling in its execution, dispassionate, incisive, and elegant. It is divinely inspired. His play is magnificent, a masterfully supple tool in his hands, sharp and deadly, and at times unfathomable. An extremely interesting approach to the game. I pray that Sakata takes good care of himself and remains healthy and active.'

After the formal speeches 14 go players, including Takagawa Kaku, Maeda Nobuaki, Fujisawa Shuko, Handa Dogen, Hashimoto Shoji, as well as Rin Kaiho and Otake Hideo representing the up-and-coming generation, all got together to play a huge game of rengo (team go). Go Seigen and Fujisawa Hosai commented on the game using a large demonstration board.

I was deeply touched by the event and stood up to offer my own thoughts: 'When I was first informed that this party was to be held in my honor I wondered if I was not too young to be distinguished by such a lavish display. But then it occurred to me that this year marks the 25th anniversary of the death of Meijin-Honinbo Shusai and that until now no player has filled that void. And so it is in that capacity, as Meijin-Honinbo and not as Sakata the individual, that I attend this gathering.

'This day is the finest of my career. Concerning go also, I believe that right now I have reached the peak of my strength. I am indeed blessed as a go player to be able to savor such happiness. On top of that, I am grateful for the support of everyone here and I intend to do all I can in the future to extend my success.'

All of what I said was true and then some. When I thought of the effort that went into holding this event and the number of people who strived to make it a success I was overwhelmed. It was a party I will remember for the rest of my life.

In between tournament games this year I played teaching games for magazines, gave interviews and made personal appearances. I also sat in on panel discussions, was asked to sit for photographers to take my picture and attended various social functions. The circle of my acquaintances broadened to include singers and actors, such as Katsu Shintaro, who made famous the character Zatoichi, the blind samurai.

All of this activity, on top of my nightly forays into the Ginza, was exhausting. I hardly saw my wife and family at all that year. Even if I could

have split myself into two or three Sakatas there would still not have been enough to go around.

I won the Asahi Pro Best Ten in April, which gave me my seventh title for the year. The only title that slipped through my grasp in 1964 was the Judan. It may be recalled that in 1961 I had also won seven titles, but since this earlier total did not include the Meijin it is not as prominent in my mind.

In 1964 I racked up win after win and some writers took to calling me 'Sakata the Annihilator'. I surprised even myself with the sure touch of my technique and my psychological toughness. Even in the Judan tournament I prevailed until the final round before losing. I was vaguely aware of envious whispers and unpleasant remarks made behind my back, but that is just human nature. When someone enjoys tremendous success it is natural for others to search for the negative in that person's life. I paid no attention.

Next I defeated Takagawa 4-0 in May to retain my Honinbo title. Throughout my career Takagawa was a sitting duck for me. We contested three Honinbo matches, one Judan title, five Nihon Ki-in Championships, one Oza title, two Pro Best Ten Matches, two Nihon Ki-in Number One titles and one NHK Cup and I only lost one of these 15 titles, the 9th Nihon Ki-in Championship. I have not made an exact count of my lifetime winning percentage against him, but it has to have been seventy or eighty percent. However, no matter how many times or how badly I beat him I always aimed to best his record of nine straight wins of the Honinbo title.

I next blasted Fujisawa Shuko in the 3rd Meijin match by a score almost as good, 4-1. By defending the top two titles I found my reputation growing even greater. Takagawa said of my technique that, 'Previously Sakata would stubbornly play all-out and frequently overextend himself while seeking the maximum amount of profit in a position. But now he has added the element of thickness to his game and has also developed a keen eye for the broad picture. Furthermore, the technical and the psychological aspects of his game are perfectly in tune.'

In October I defeated Kajiwara 2-0 to defend my Oza title. This victory was the 35th of my career. At this point it was not clear who would step forward to contest my domination of the go world. During this entire year I had lost only two tournament games against 30 wins for a 93.8 win-

ning percentage. I truly felt that I was practically unbeatable.

Game Eleven. 11th NHK Cup (1964)

White: Sakata Eiju Meijin & Honinbo

Black: Fujisawa Shuko 9-dan

Telecast on 15 March 1964.

Figure 1 (1-50).

Black 45 is the vital point.

Figure 2 (51-114)

Black 83 is an overplay. Black does not have enough ko threats, so he should connect to the left of 81.

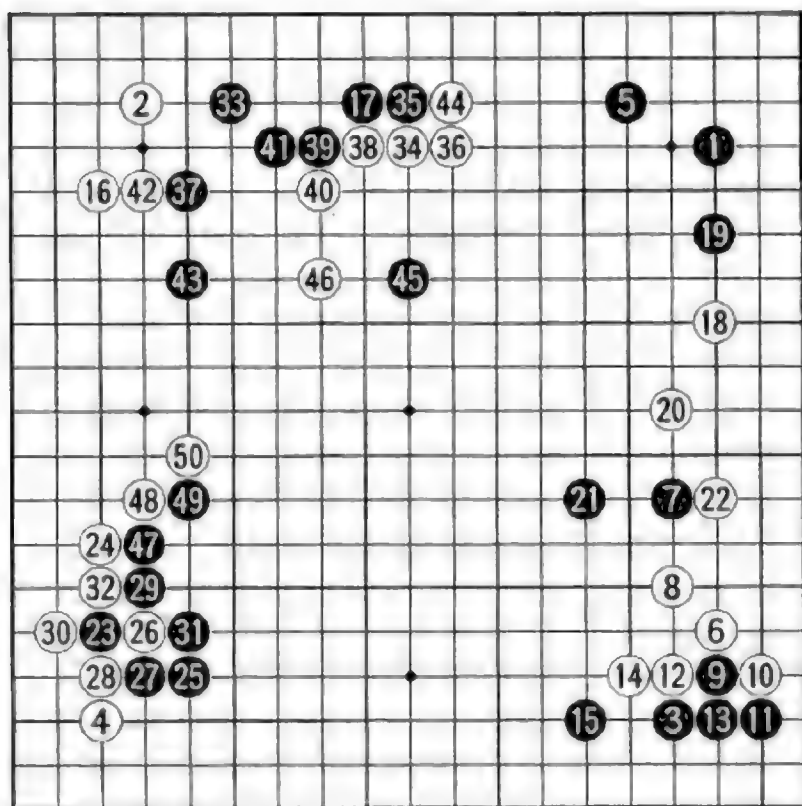


Figure 1 (1-50)

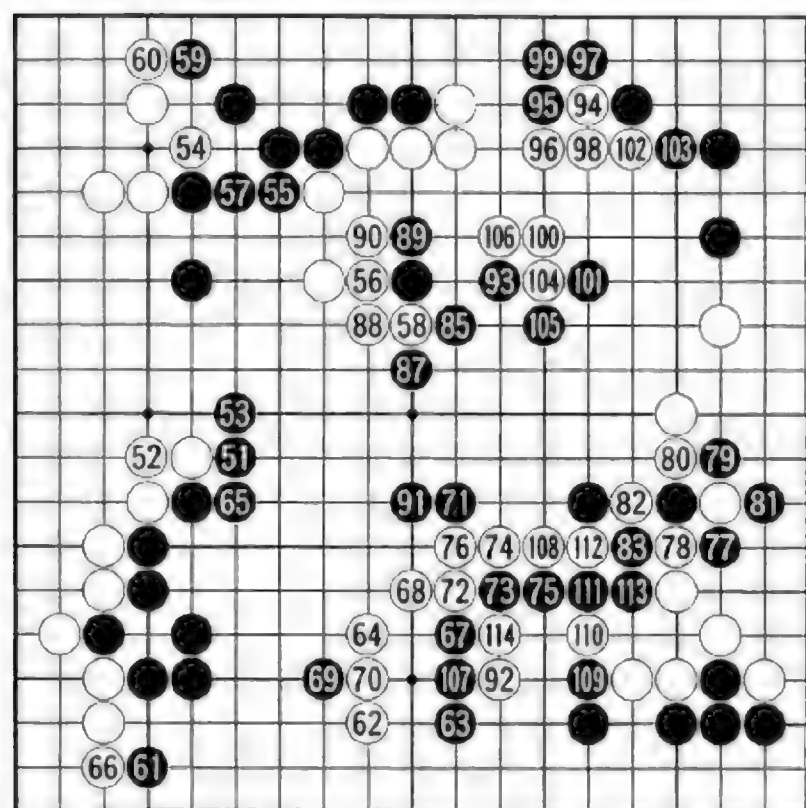


Figure 2 (51-114)

84: ko (left of 81); 86: connects (right of 82)

This game is a good illustration of the styles of both players. Sakata's shinogi (skill at saving weak groups) prevailed over Shuko's attack.

Black resigns after White 114.

Game Twelve. 1st Pro Best Ten Game One

White: Sakata Eiju, Meijin & Honinbo

Black: Takagawa Shukaku 9-dan

Played on 7 April 1964.

Figure 1 (1-65)

Sakata secured his 7th concurrent title by defeating Takagawa 2-0 in this match. This game follows the common pattern with these two of Takagawa building influence and Sakata taking profit.

White 48 is a mistake. White should first hane at 51; if Black cuts at 'a', he can then cut at 48.

Black 53. Black could instead play at 60.

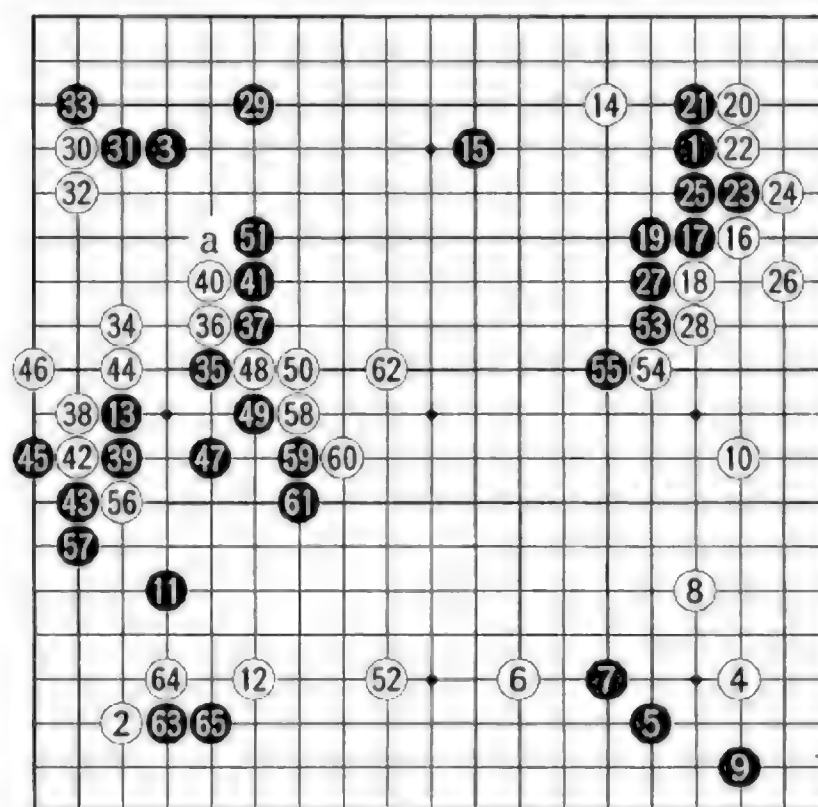


Figure 1 (1-65)

Figure 2 (66-130)

White offers the strongest resistance to Black's attack behind his lines at the bottom. When he blocks at 84 he has a definite lead. In retrospect, it is clear that Black should have exchanged Black 84 for White 'a' before invading at the bottom. Black has to abandon his group.

White 88 is a mistake which lets Black get a ko here later. White could have lived unconditionally as in Dia. 1. Note the key role played by White 1.

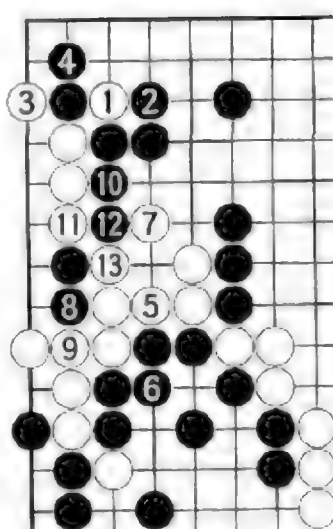
Even so, when White makes a trade with 126 and 128, giving up his group on the left, he has the lead.

Figure 3 (131–208)

White 52 is a mistake: White can forestall the cut in sente just by attaching at 54, enabling him to switch to 88 next.

White 66. White should peep with White 67, then live with 68. An upset looks possible when Black attacks at 69.

Black 79. If at 81, Black might win, as the best White could do is to live in gote. Takagawa overlooked the tesuji of 106 and 108, which secures



Dia. 1

life in sente, as Black has to make his second eye with 'a'. That lets White keep the lead by blocking at 'b'.

Black resigns after White 208.

Game Thirteen. 3rd Meijin Title, Game Five

White: Sakata Eiju, Meijin & Honinbo

Black: Fujisawa Shuko 9-dan

Played on 6, 7 September 1964.

Figure 1 (1–60)

This is the game with which Sakata defended the Meijin title.

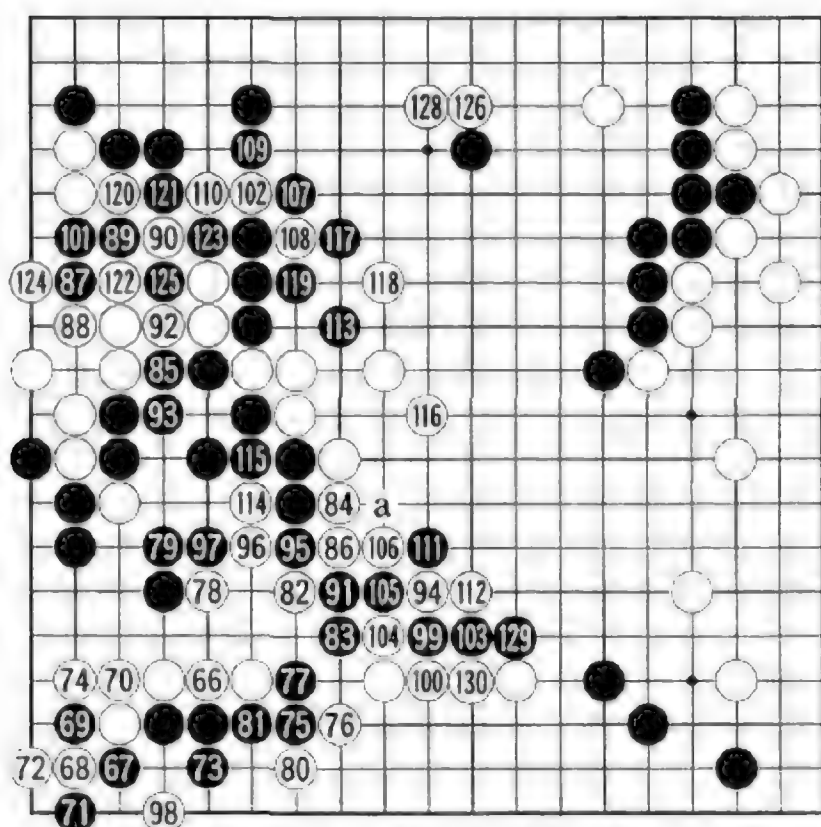


Figure 2 (66–130)
127: connects the ko

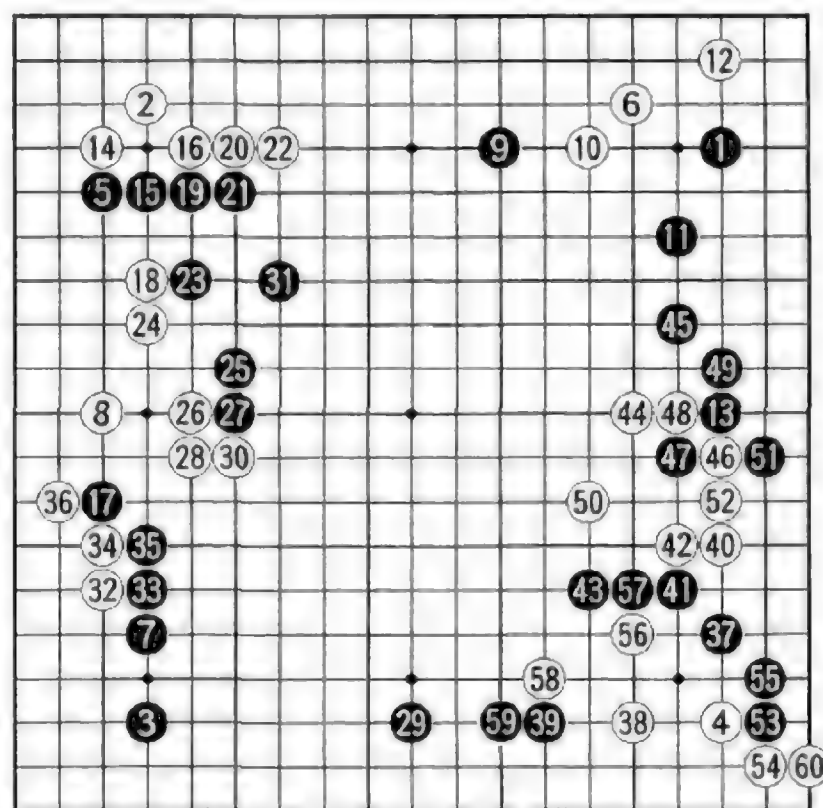


Figure 1 (1–60)

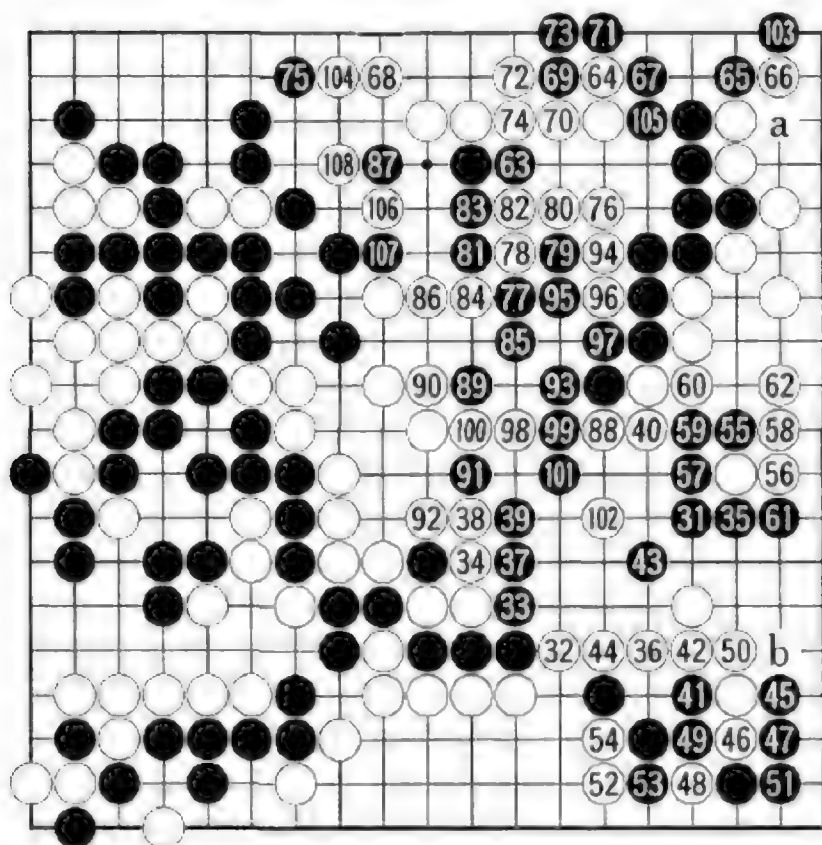


Figure 3 (131–208)

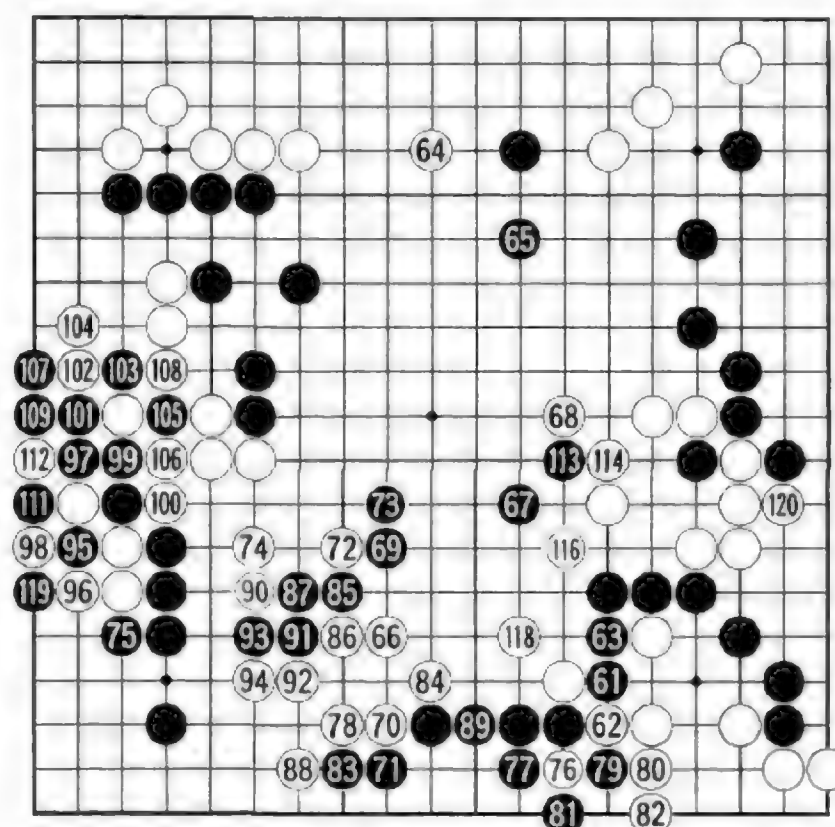


Figure 2 (61–120)
110: ko (left of 105); 115: ko (at 111); 117: ko (at 95)

Figure 2 (61–120)

When White makes the deep invasion of 66, Black's attack is not as severe as it might be. White makes good shape with 72 and 74 and is satisfied. Black stakes the game on his attack at 95.

Black gets a ko with the emergency measure of 107 and 109, but since it is two-step ko, it is not good enough.

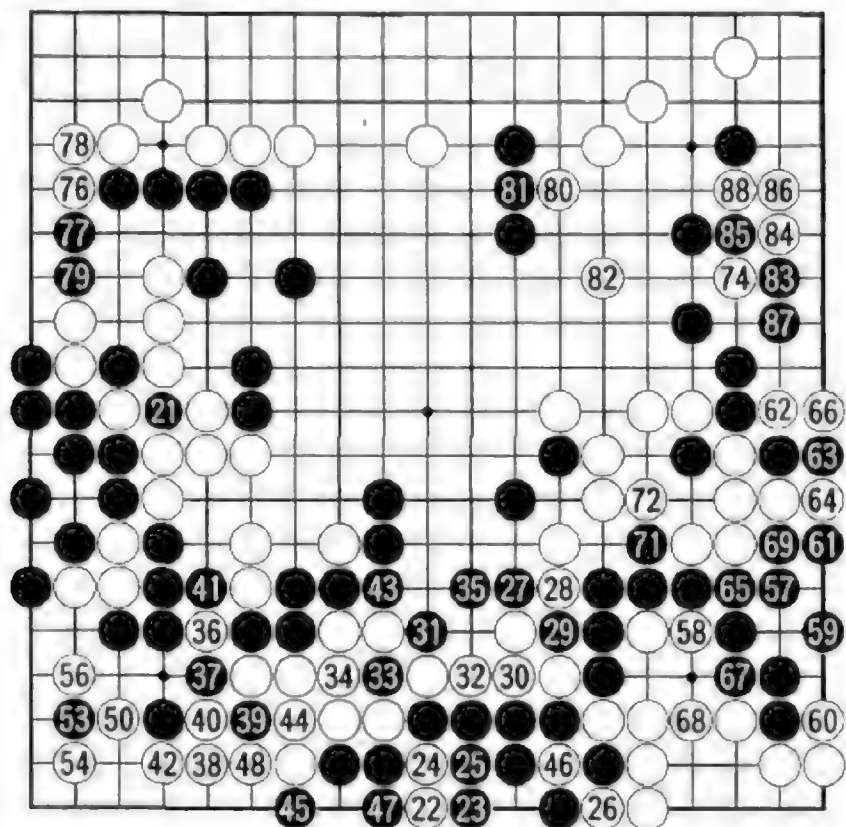


Figure 3 (121–188)

49: ko (right of 46); 51: connects (at 46); ko (over 21); 52, 55, 70, 73; 75: connects (left of 21)

Figure 3 (121–188)

Black 31 is another strong attack, but White handles it skillfully with 36 and 38. White 50 is enough to keep White in the lead.

Ironically, Black won all the ko fights but White won the game.

Black resigns after White 188.

Game Fourteen. 12th Nihon Ki-in Ch'ship, Game Four

White: Sakata Eiju, Meijin & Honinbo

Black: Miyashita Shuyo 9-dan

Played on 26, 27 January 1965

Figure 1 (1–50)

Black 49. Invading here rather than defending the top with 'a' is the Miyashita style.

Figure 2 (51–100)

Black 71. Black 73 is better; Black comes under a lot of pressure in the fight after 72.

Black 75. Better to hane at 76.

White takes the lead with 96.

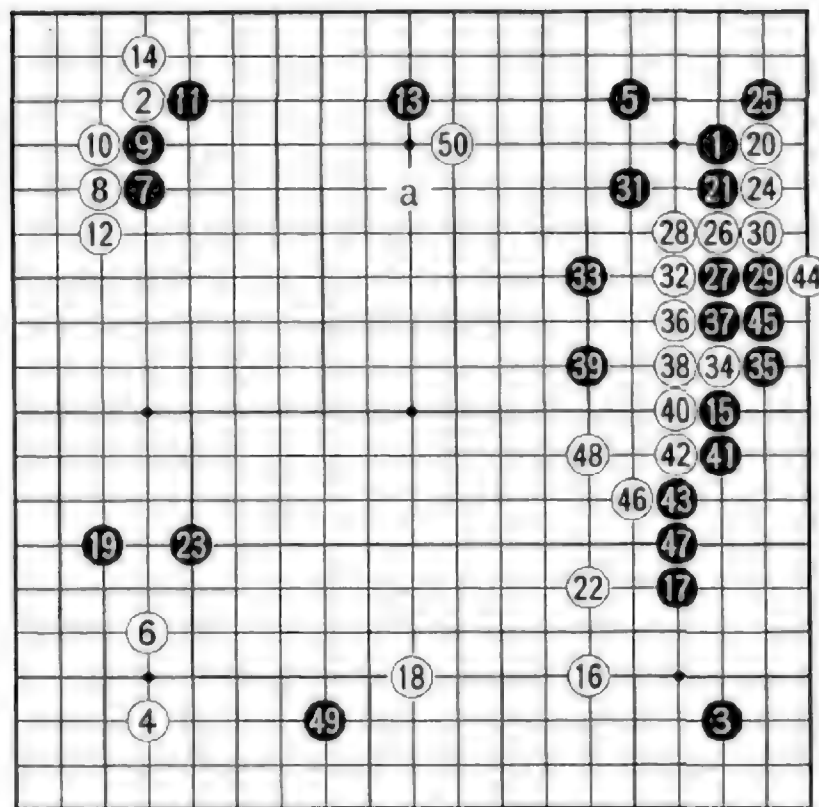
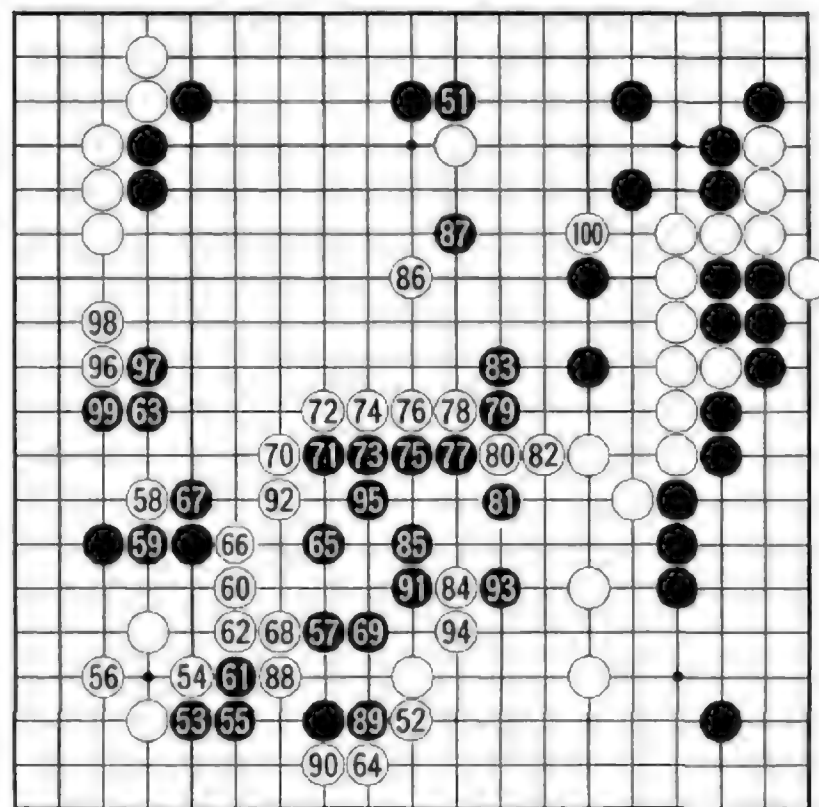


Figure 1 (1–50)





Playing Miyashita Shuyo. Watching (extreme right) is Yamabe Toshiro.

month when I defeated Yamabe Toshiro 9-dan 4-0 to defend my Honinbo title. Then came the fateful Meijin match in the summer.

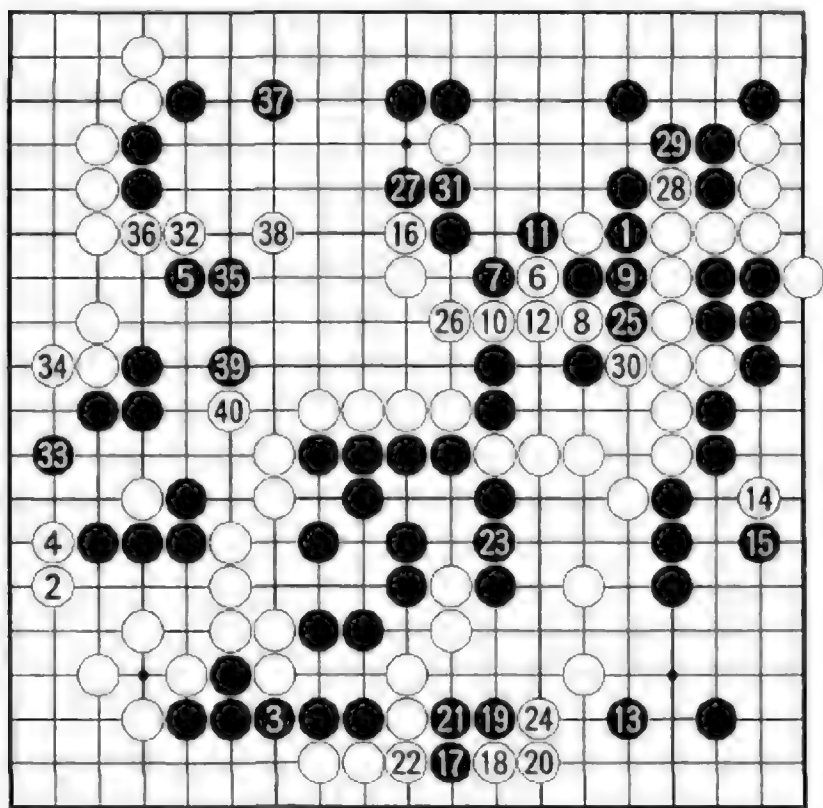


Figure 3 (101-140)

The Meijin league that year consisted of Go Seigen, Kitani, Takagawa, both Fujisawas, Ohira Shuzo, Hashimoto Shoji, Kajiwara Takeo and Rin Kaiho. But Kitani fell ill and Go Seigen found himself in poor condition and lost all of his games. That gave the youngest participant an opening and he became the challenger with a 6-1

score.

This created a sensation amongst go players since Rin was scarcely twenty-three years old. It was true that we had split the games we had played up to that time with three wins apiece, but opinion was decidedly in my favor as to who would take the match.

Even partisans of Rin were not optimistic, declaring that he would be lucky to win one game and if he should win two he could consider it a personal triumph. Rin himself seems to have viewed things in a similar light.

I echoed the conventional belief but also spoke from experience when I said, 'It is inconceivable that we will ever see a Meijin in his twenties.' I expressed myself quite vehemently.

It had taken me ten long and painful years to become Honinbo after losing to Hashimoto when I was 31. Then, another two years to become Meijin. I had needed that time to mature psychologically and to nurture my playing skills. Only then was I able to climb to the summit of the go world.

My generation was convinced that someone in his twenties could not possibly possess the experience necessary to win the Meijin title, no matter how psychologically mature he might be. Then, too, in the back of my mind was the ques-

tion of what significance those ten empty years of my life would hold if someone were able to capture the title at such a young age. Finally, a part of me was trying to shore myself up mentally by using my old trick of boasting publicly about an upcoming match.

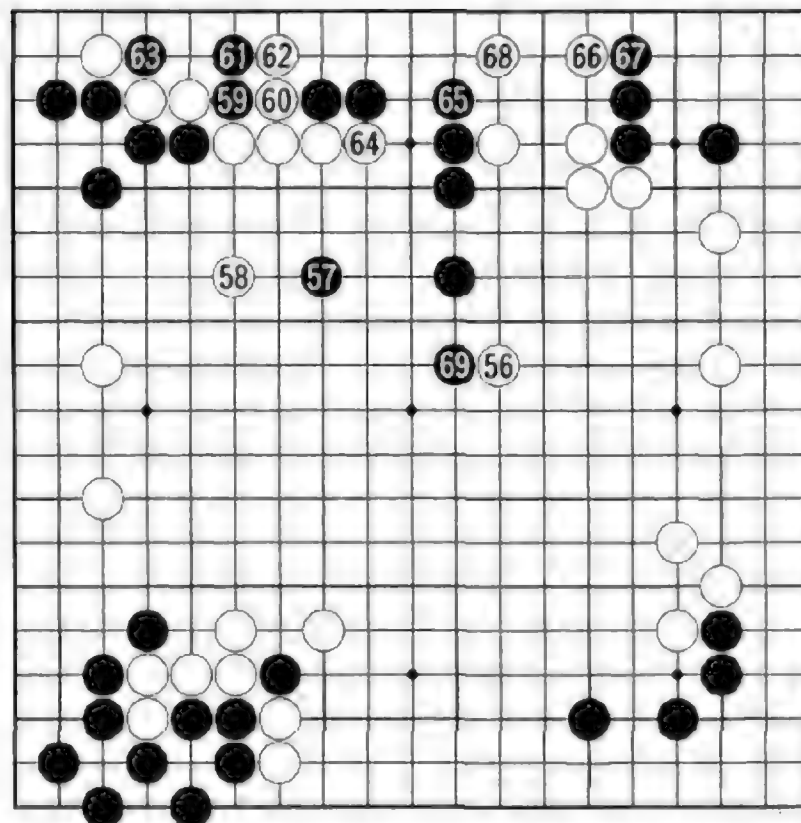
I was fired up for another successful defense of the Meijin title but perhaps I was too smug. I was even a little relieved to have Rin as challenger because of the gulf I perceived between our playing strengths. Even as he gained momentum and confidence with each win in the league, I closed my eyes to the approaching storm. It was an inexcusable case of arrogance.

The first game was an overwhelming victory for me playing black. In answer to reporters' questions Rin scratched his head and said, 'Well, it was as expected . . .' but would say no more.

I had won in a lopsided fashion, but something about Rin was unsettling to me. He was always renowned for his tenacity and while I take a back seat to no one when it comes to tenacious resistance in difficult positions, Rin's persistence was something different. He could be infuriatingly stubborn. During that game I knew that my win was certain, but Rin calmly played on, giving no indication of having any intention of resigning. After a while I started to wonder if I hadn't committed some kind of terrible oversight. It was quite an unpleasant sensation. It is unusual for a player so young to possess the ability to produce such a feeling of uneasiness in his opponent.

In the second game I allowed Rin to take territory in all four corners while I established positions on the side of the board and influence in the center. It was a daring strategy that one sometimes adopts in important games. Considered magnanimously, it was a plan designed to demonstrate the range and scope of the game I was confidently playing; a negative assessment would fault me for underestimating the strength of my opponent. I was also careless. After ceding the corners I was compelled to stretch the boundaries of my side and central position to the limit and Rin took the opportunity to counterattack there. It was a tense, painful situation and on the second day the stress and fatigue were so great that I was forced to take a stimulant in order to make it through the day.

I lost the game by four points. Afterward Rin said, 'If I had lost that second game I probably would have lost the match as well, without picking up a single win.'



*Sakata (White) v. Rin Kaiho, 8-dan
Game 2, Meijin Title Match (1965)*

Aware of Black's strategy to secure as much profit as possible, Sakata made a deliberate attempt to make the center his sphere of influence. He was successful in attacking and killing Black in the center but he gave up too much on the upper side and lost the game.

Young Rin Kaiho won the second, third and fourth games and by serving up the finishing blow in the sixth game he took the title. To defeat Sakata, widely regarded as the best player in the world, in this manner was a shock to all go fans.

The third game turned into a wild, difficult fight. As the stones become entangled in a battle in the center of the board an extremely complex ko developed in the upper left corner. Rin fought on doggedly in an inferior position and managed to postpone the outcome until the endgame. But it wasn't until the closing moves of the game, when I made a simple mistake, that he was able to pull off an upset. At the end Black was exactly five points ahead, so I lost by *jigo*. It had been an emotionally charged slugfest that lasted more than 300 moves. In my opinion it turned the tide of the match in Rin's favor. I enjoyed a lead in the first half of the fourth game, having played well with white, but I missed my chance to land the finishing blow in the middle game. True to form, Rin played calmly and persistently to grind out a three-point win. As in the previous game, the ending was tedious and difficult. My stamina was lacking and I found myself unable to count out the board precisely.

At this point in the match I started to become

tense and panicky. After my third loss in a row it seemed as if things were getting out of hand. I was amazed to find that the adversary I had dismissed as unequal to the contest was becoming stronger with each passing game. Besides that, it came as a rude shock to discover how the difference in years and physical conditioning between myself at 45 and Rin at 23 handicapped me.

With my back to the wall I gathered my resources for the fifth game, determined not to give my opponent the slightest opportunity to exploit any chinks in my defense. In due course Rin misplayed his position and I won by resignation. Perhaps I had reason for hope: when I defeated Fujisawa Shuko two years before I had trailed by the same score of 2-3.

But it was not to be. Had the shock I experienced earlier at losing three straight games demoralized me? Or had Rin used his odd ability to defuse an adversary's aggressive instincts to neutralize the fighting spirit that welled up inside me during the fifth game? Whatever it was, I found myself out of sorts, distracted from conducting my usual game plan. I was outplayed every step of the way.

During the dinner break after the second day's play, I alone remained in the playing room, hunched over the board. Rin had gone out to eat along with the reporters and everyone else connected with the match. I studied the shambles of White's position and mumbled to myself, 'It's all been taken from me. The Meijin title has been taken, too. Everything's been taken . . .' It was an expression of emptiness, of disconsolation, but, more than that, a heart-rending commentary on the severity of professional go.

That was the beginning of 1965. At the beginning of 1966 I lost my Nihon Ki-in Championship title to Ohira 9-dan. I managed to hold on to my Judan title and even to defeat Fujisawa Shuko 4-0 to defend my Honinbo title, but then Rin Kaiho thwarted my comeback attempt in the Meijin match by winning 4-1.

I remember 1967 with mixed feelings. On the one hand, I won my seventh Honinbo title by defeating Rin 4-1 and in the process I established a record that remains unbroken to this day: 17 straight wins in match play in one title. On the other hand, I not only lost again to Rin 4-1 in another Meijin rematch, but I also relinquished my Nihon Ki-in Number One title to Otake Hideo. After losing one of my titles the

year before to Ohira, who was born ten years after I was, this new setback confirmed to me that the younger generation was a force to be reckoned with.

Takagawa and Fujisawa Shuko managed to buck the trend individually by winning the Meijin title, but neither was able to hold it for more than one year. The newspapers and go magazines deemed such successes the last hurrahs of the old guard. And the standard-bearer of the new age was, of course, Rin Kaiho.

My own personal rivalry with Rin was played out on many levels during these years and in a way it mirrored conditions in the go world at large. Players of my generation no longer set the pace. Instead we had to struggle to keep up with the young Turks who were taking the go world by storm. Up to this point in my career I had always faced opponents my own age or older, but in the case of Rin and Otake the age difference between us was the equivalent of a father to his sons. I could still compete intellectually over the go board as well as I did during my prime but I could not stand up to the physically draining conditions of a grueling, drawn-out game. Then, too, Rin Kaiho represented something of an unknown quantity to me: I was used to competing among my peers in go tournaments and I had no experience dealing with young talent. There was no point of reference with which I could measure his technique or strength.

The surprising thing about Rin was how, despite his youth, he approached a match as important as the Meijin title with such a composed manner. I was also impressed with his forthright character. His skill at go was perhaps not as great as mine, but this only serves to emphasize the fact that he managed to overcome that shortcoming with nothing except raw courage; that is the mark of a born competitor.

In terms of go style, Rin resembled Takagawa Kaku. He was the direct antithesis of a fiery, emotional player such as myself. Instead, he played a calm, rational game.

At that time one of Rin's strong points was the great patience he had regarding go. In particular, he never became flustered or discouraged, even after playing a bad move. Otake Hideo is just the opposite; he can play a brilliant game but if he somehow makes a mistake he loses heart and the will to continue. He ends up defeating himself. It was always interesting to watch them play each other because one never

knew who would self-destruct first, Otake because of humiliation at making a bad move or Rin from time trouble.

But there was more to Rin's game than just patience. He was widely regarded as being 'unsinkable'. In Japanese the phrase used to describe him was *nimai-goshi*, a term that comes from sumo wrestling. Literally it means 'twin level hips' and it denotes a wrestler whose center of gravity is so low that it is impossible to topple him.

As a result of my Meijin matches with Rin I was in part responsible for that nickname being given to him. Several times during those games I felt that I had a chance to cripple my adversary with a single blow and with that in mind I laid the groundwork that I was convinced would tip the balance in my favor. However, Rin was quick enough to dodge my blows. Every time I tried to throw him with a sumo-style arm toss he twisted and turned until the danger was past. Most of the time I failed to trick him and only succeeded in wearing myself out.

It did not take long for me to become frustrated at the way things were going and to lash out angrily. During our first Meijin match in 1965 I demanded that from the fourth game on, Go Seigen, who was Rin's teacher and mentor, not be allowed to officiate at any future site in this series. Then, in 1968, when Rin again challenged me for the Honinbo title, I registered a complaint during a break in play of the third game.

What I complained about was Rin's habit of snapping his fan open and closed while we were playing. Now these fans are used by many go players and I myself have been known to get carried away with my fan-snapping on occasion, so I cannot criticize him too harshly. I also realize that Rin did not do this maliciously, it was just a nervous quirk of his. But that *whack! whack! whack!* sound was enough to drive a person crazy. He could really set up a din at times. I found it hard to hear myself think.

Representatives of the sponsoring Mainichi newspaper rushed out to find a substitute and came back with a miniature fan which Shimamura 9-dan, the official observer for the game, persuaded Rin to use. I was immensely relieved at the change; for someone like myself who is morbidly sensitive to distractions during play this was one less obstacle I had to overcome.

However, in the end I lost that 1968 Honinbo

match to Rin anyway. It was one of the greatest disappointments of my career. I had hoped to better Takagawa's record of nine straight Honinbo titles, but my own string of won matches ended at seven. It is true that no one other than Takagawa has won more consecutive titles, but that consideration is, both concretely and figuratively, secondary to me. I always aimed high; second place held no charm for me. No matter who the opponent, whether shodan or Meijin, I was determined to win.

At the end of 1968 I held the Judan title and little else. That was a far cry from the seven I had possessed four years previously. I was no longer viewed as the top player in the go world. It was only a matter of time before the younger generation took over completely.

Game Fifteen. 22nd Honinbo Title Game Three

White: Sakata Eiju, Honinbo & Judan

Black: Rin Kaiho Meijin

Played on 23, 24 May 1967.

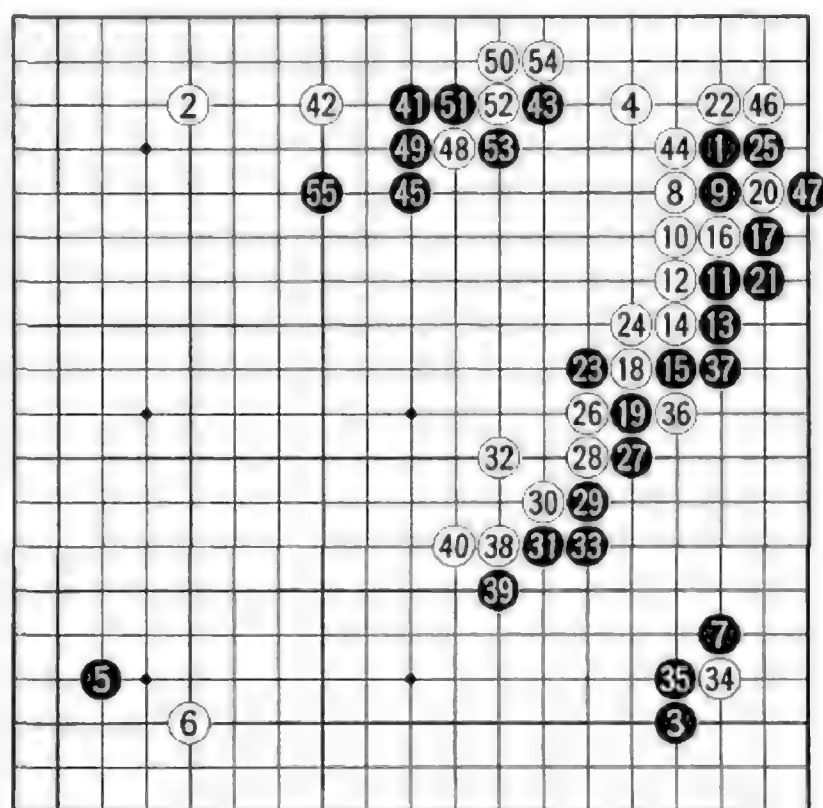


Figure 1 (1-55)

Figure 1 (1-55)

The single forcing move of 34 plays a crucial role in this game.

Figure 2 (56-110)

The corner fight is extremely complicated. Black is finally forced to add a stone at 77, so with 78 White scores a success.

Black 93 is a mistake: White is able to live here later. Correct is playing a ko with Black 'a', White 93.

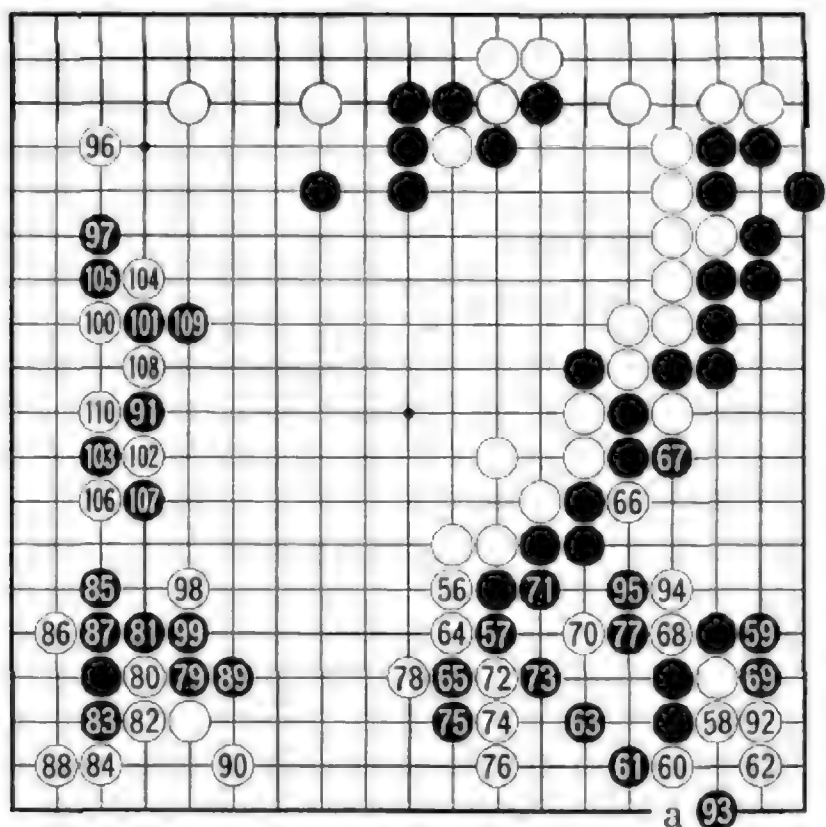


Figure 2 (56-110)

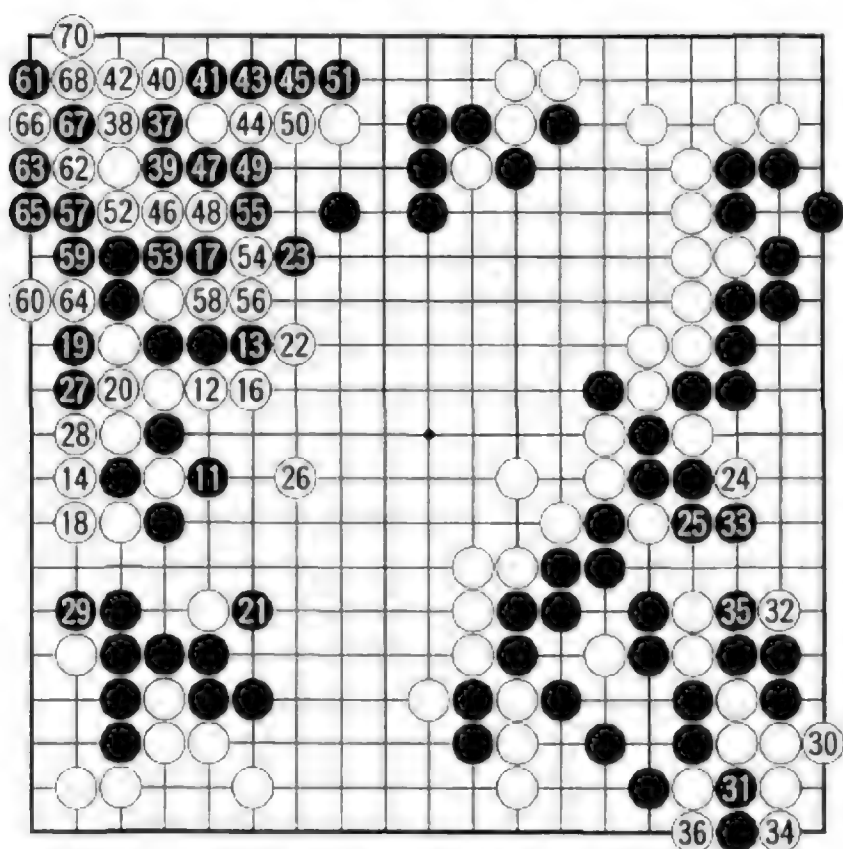


Figure 3 (111-170)

15, 69: connect

Figure 3 (111-170)

White 30 is a mistake in timing: White must play 32 first. If Black played 31 at 36, White would not be able to live even if he captured the three stones. (This mistake was discovered by Abe Yoshiteru, then 6-dan.)

Once White lives, the game is decided.

Black resigns after White 170.

Game Sixteen. 6th Judan Title Game Two

White: Sakata Eiju, Honinbo & Judan

Black: Fujisawa Hosai 9-dan

Played on 29, 30 November 1967.

The 6th Judan title match turned into a very fierce struggle. Fujisawa Hosai was known for his fondness for mimic go and for his love of fighting. Sakata had to struggle hard to prevail 3-2.

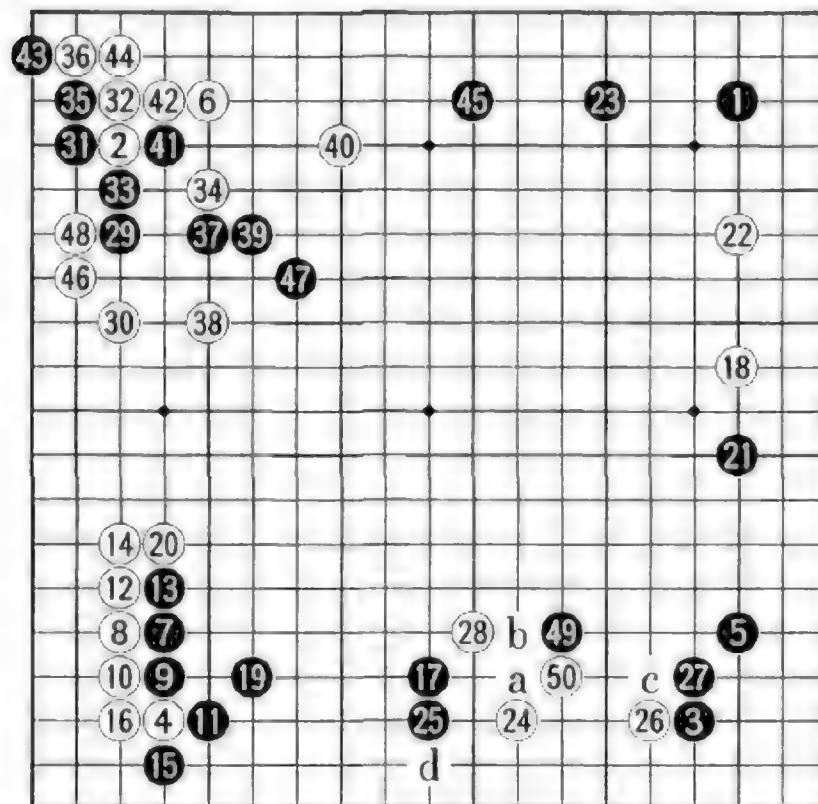


Figure 1 (1-50)

Figure 1 (1-50)

White 28. White plays lightly because this is Black's sphere of influence. If Black attacks at 'a', White will counter with 50, Black 'b', White 'c'; later he can aim at White 'd'.

White 32 is submissive: he should block at 35.

White expected 48 to be sente, but Hosai seized the opportunity to attack at 49. White 48 should have been at 'c'.

Figure 2 (51-100)

Black 61 must be at 62.

Black 73. The vital point is 90.

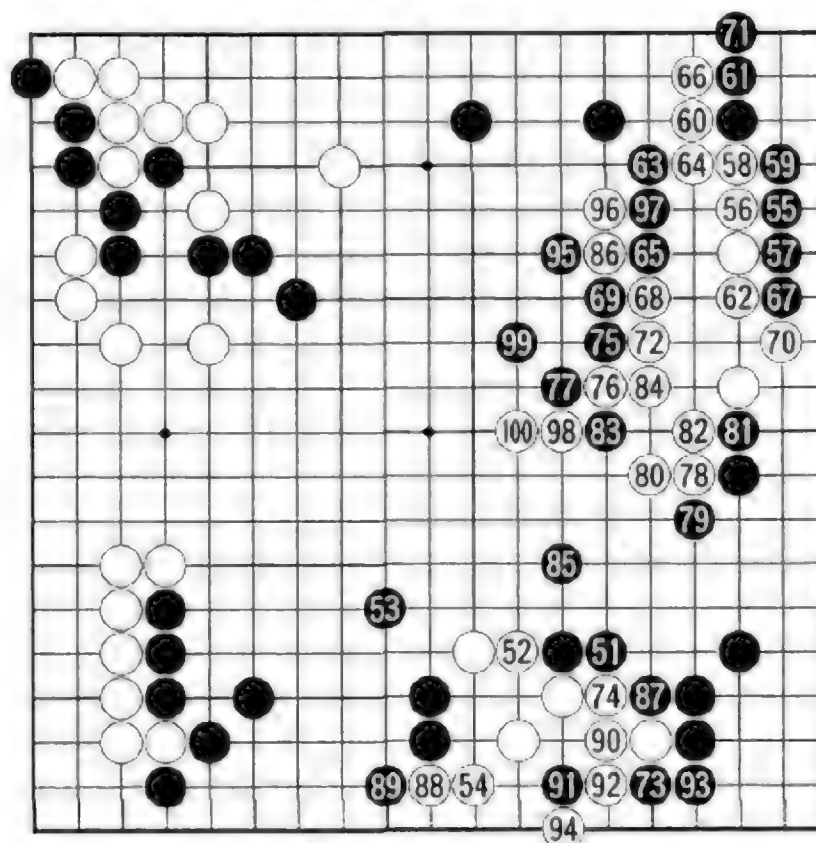


Figure 2 (51-100)

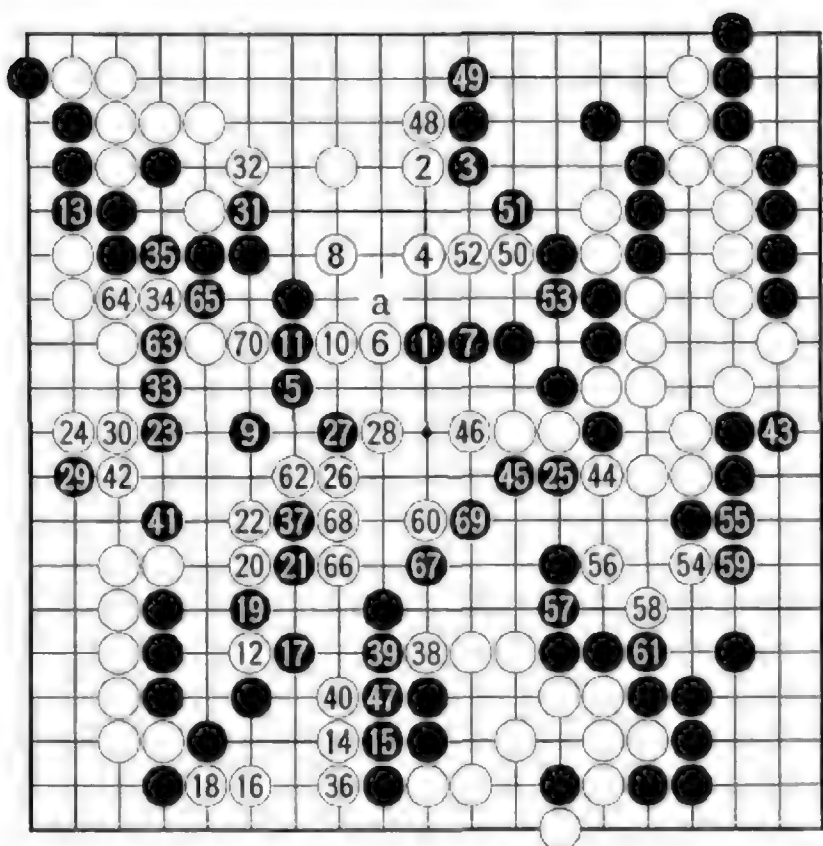
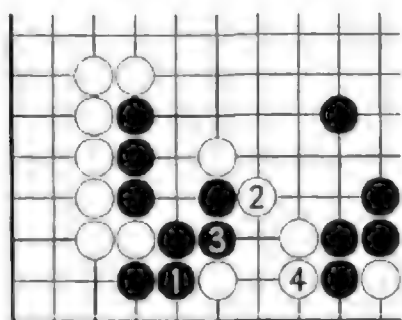


Figure 3 (101-170)



Dia. 1

Figure 3 (101-170)

White 6 is an overplay: White should just block at 48. However, Black fails to take advantage of it; if he played 7 at 'a', the ensuing fight would be difficult for White. Black 7 is the losing move.

Black 15 should be at 36. Black overlooked White 16. If he resists with 1 in Dia. 1, he has no good answer to 2 and 4.

When he left the hotel early the next morning, the newspaper reporter heard the sound of go stones coming from Fujisawa's Hosai's room. It seems that he was so upset by this loss that he spent the whole night going over the game.

Black resigns after White 170.

One Last Moment in the Limelight

During this period in my life I felt as if the years were finally catching up to me. Not only professionally, although I somehow realized that continuous tournament play under the most demanding conditions is bound to take its toll, but my personal life suffered as well.

After I lost my Meijin title to Rin in 1965, the writer with whom I had first begun visiting the night clubs of Tokyo published an expose of my life entitled 'Imbecilic Genius'. I was stunned that

a man I considered a dear personal friend could stab me in the back in such a way. In this short novel he used the real names of myself and the people I was involved with, described my participation in the nightlife of the Ginza and even disclosed intimate details of my personal life.

Perhaps this writer intended to shock me, to curb what he thought was my excessive carousing, but coming on the heels of my loss to Rin I felt devastated. The book also created an uproar in my family, as you may imagine.

I immediately severed all relations with this man and even when his wife died a short while later I refused to offer any words of condolence. It seemed to me that having friends in the literary world was not always a good thing. When you are on top of your profession and everything is going well, writers can be wonderfully entertaining companions, but the minute you begin to decline they are ready to cut you up. And since I am not a writer myself I could not defend myself in the press. It was a miserable feeling.

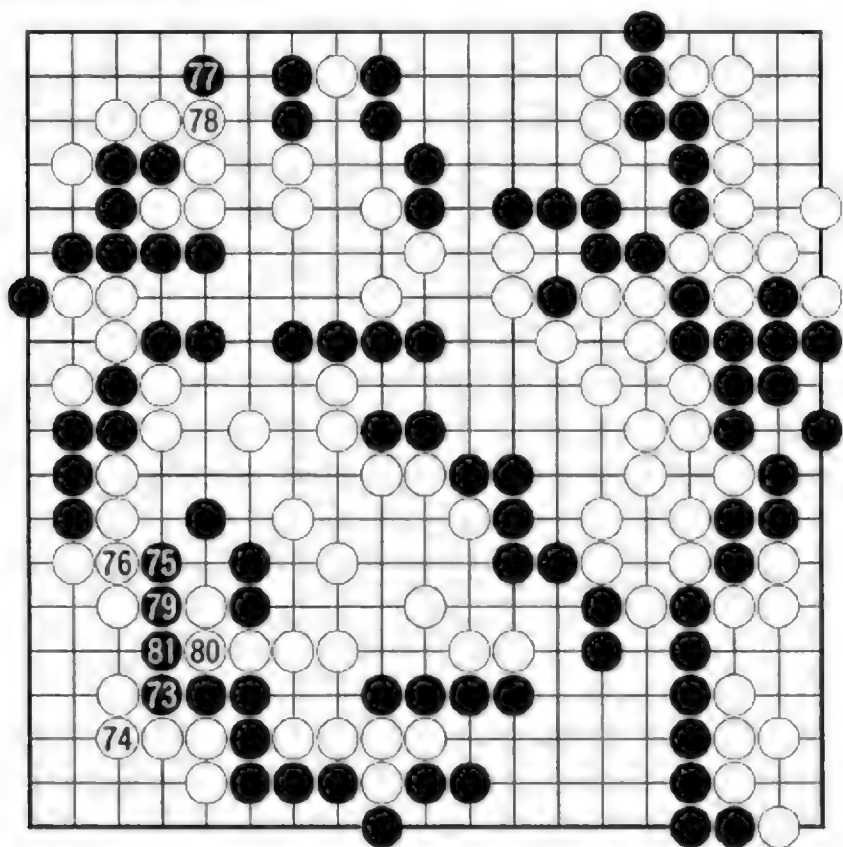
Things did not improve much during the next few years. I would win one title and lose another; I couldn't manage to achieve the winning form of my best years. Events seemed to conspire against me: besides the relentless surge of the new generation of go players, I had to contend with serious medical problems and the break-up of my marriage. But in 1972 everything came together.

I started the year by defeating my old nemesis Hashimoto Utao to win the 10th Judan title 3-2 and the Oza title 2-1. Then I beat Otake Hideo for my eighth NHK Championship. I was celebrated in the press that year as a 'rejuvenated Sakata' and indeed I was. My physical condition improved, I got married again, this time to a former hostess in the Ginza, and moved into a new condominium near the Nihon Ki-in. For the first time in years I enjoyed a stable personal life.

As a result of my tournament successes in 1972, I was awarded the Shusai Prize and also chosen as the outstanding player of the year by *Kido* magazine. For one who was widely considered to be over the hill, winning these awards gave me great satisfaction. My comeback had been formally recognized and applauded.

The next year I defeated Kato Masao, at that time 8-dan, by the score of 3-2 to defend my Nihon Ki-in Championship title. This was the eighth time Kato had challenged for a title and he was starting to get a reputation in the press as the 'eternal also-ran' or 'professional challenger'.

The fact that he won the first two games and failed to get the one victory he needed to beat me damaged his reputation further. However, two years later he won the Gosei title by defeating Otake and his career took off. I am sure the reader is aware of the great success he has enjoyed since then.



Dia. 1

Cho Chikun, at that time 18 years old and 6-dan, was the challenger for the Nihon Ki-in Championship the next year. Once again I lost the first two games and once again I pulled off an upset, winning 3-2. The key to this match was the fourth game. Dia. 1 shows the critical position. Cho, playing white, was winning when he connected at 74. This was a terrible blunder. If he had answered Black 73 by playing White 81 there would have been no problem, but he had overlooked the possibility of Black 75. I broke into his center territory with Black 79 and 81 and Cho resigned. It was a stunning upset for him and immediately after the game he burst into tears. Later on he spoke bitterly to reporters about this game. Perhaps because the shock was so great he lost the next game as well. For the second year in a row I had retained my title by way of an upset victory.

I was again responsible for crushing a youngster's dream and contributing to his poor reputation. But I was unrepentant: later on I met Cho and told him, 'Losing that match was the best thing that could have happened to you.' The proof of that statement came when he won the Kisei, Meijin, Honinbo, and Judan titles in the same year. Had he not been shocked into a more mature approach to go it is doubtful that he

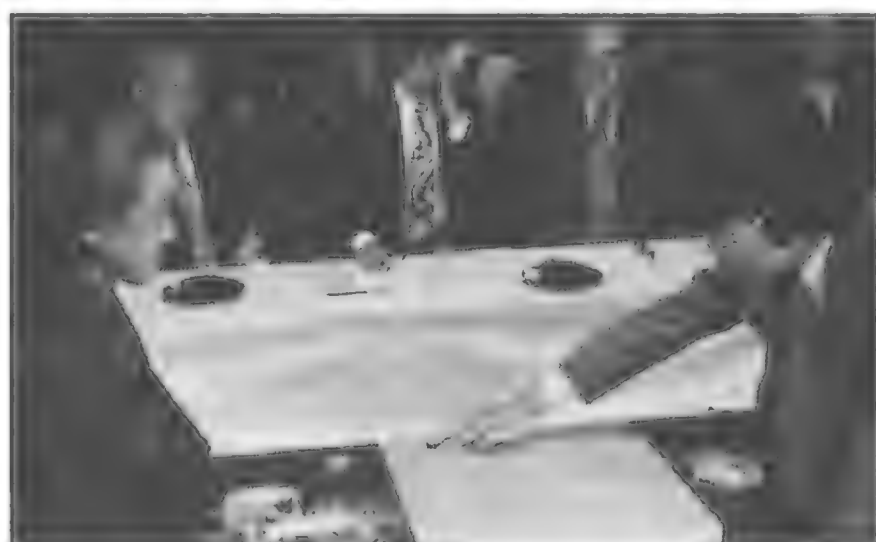
could have achieved so much. In one of his books, Cho alluded to this by saying, 'I became strong by trading blows with Sakata' and 'one does not become strong when one wins but when one loses.'

The Nihon Ki-in Championship was merged with the Kansai Ki-in Championship the following year. During the 22 years since its inception I had won 12 titles, more than half of the total. My opponents over the years ran the whole gamut from Kitani, who was born in 1909, to Cho, who was born in 1956. I suppose that I am the only go player who has faced such a wide spectrum of players.

Ishida Yoshio was twenty-nine years younger than I when I challenged him for his Honinbo title in 1975. I knew that I could not match him in terms of physical stamina but I also felt that my skill at go was by no means inferior. Frankly speaking, I considered Ishida's talent to lie in the competitive drive which he brought to his match play. But I was sure that one day he would be stymied in that respect and face a dead end. Besides that, I suggested to Ishida that he be more modest and reserved in his words and actions; I knew from experience how I myself had injured my reputation through thoughtless words.

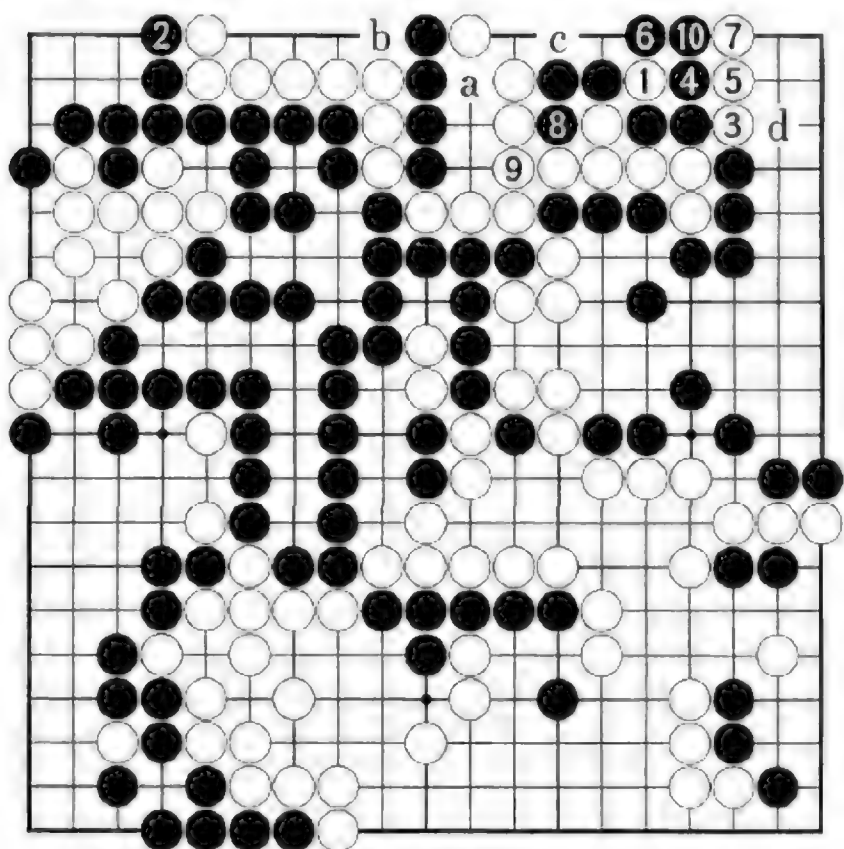
I started the match well and after four games the score was 3-1 in my favor. Speculation ran high in the press that I would once again win the Honinbo title. But I committed an unbelievable mistake at the end of the fifth game that affected the final result of the match.

The move in question was White 1 in Dia. 1. I mistakenly believed that this was a clever forcing move that would make the best use of my stones on the upper side but my opponent simply ignored it and played Black 2. By filling this liberty



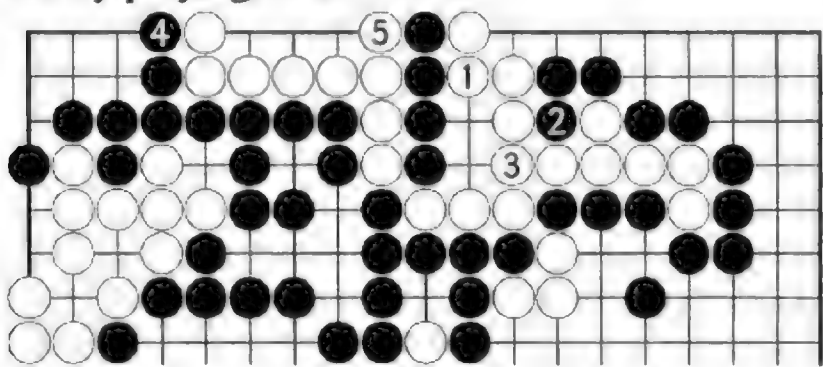
Sakata challenges Ishida Yoshio for the 30th Honinbo title. Watching are Murashima 9-dan (right of Sakata) and Takagawa (left of Ishida).

Black wins the race to capture and the game as well; if White plays 'a', Black plays 'b'. Even if White plays 'c' instead of 'a', Black answers at 'd' and White still cannot try to capture the black stones within his position because of his own shortage of liberties.

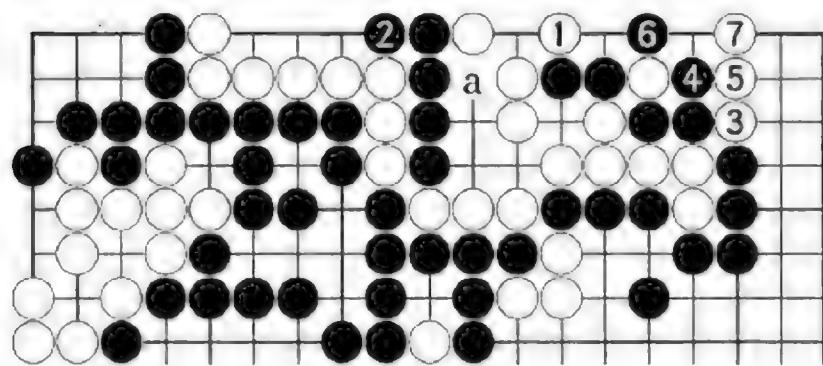


Dia. 1

I should have simply filled a liberty with White 1 in Dia. 2. If Black plays 2 and 4, White captures Black's stones with 5 and the game is over. Even after my blunder I could still have won the game by playing White 1 in Dia. 3. Black captures the stones on the left with 2, but White keeps the advantage by taking Black's stones to the right. Of course, if Black plays 2 at 4, White wins by playing at 'a'.



Dia. 2



Dia. 3

How could I make such an elementary mistake, probably the worst in my career? I had plenty of time on the clock, although I am not

sure if that worked in my favor or not; Ishida was out of time and depended on his instincts to find the correct move. More important, I was worn out after two days of constant tension yet still determined to squeeze the most out of the board position.

As I sat deciding on my move the door of the room suddenly opened and my friend Ezaki Masanori, the writer, entered. I realized that he had come to witness my victory personally, but his timing could not have been worse. The distraction broke my concentration and I found myself staring blankly at the board. The rest is history.

I tried to regain my composure before the sixth game, but it was no use. My nerves were too rattled from this incredible loss to view matters objectively. This is my greatest fault; I approach things with too straightforward an attitude rather than with a bold one. I lost the final two games playing black, and the last one because of another bad mistake, although not as terrible as in the fifth game. Ironically enough, my final challenge for the Honinbo title ended in the same way my first one had: after leading 3-1 I suffered an upset defeat and the fifth game proved to be the turning point in the match.

The only other major title challenge I have been able to mount in recent years was in the 1979 Meijin match against Otake Hideo. (See GW16 and 17.) I won the Meijin league in fine style that year, defeating all my main rivals, and I felt that I was in good condition for the match. However, Otake practically crushed me. I won the third game playing white by killing one of his groups as he tried to squeeze the most out of the endgame and overextended himself. Other than that, though, I lost all the games.

Otake has always been a difficult opponent for me. Although we are equally matched in skill and technique, I have never been able to win a match against him. He was simply a more wily competitor than I. Several times I built up a favorable position only to suffer setbacks in the latter half of the game before eventually losing. The same thing happened frequently during this Meijin match.

Although I have not been as successful recently as I would like to be, I am not quite ready to retire. It is my dream to win 70 titles by the time I am 70 years old. Since the competition is tough and there is always the danger of being worn down by continuous play, I do not know if I

will realize my dream but I will do my best. If I can limit the number of games I play to two a month I am confident that I can still compete with the young players today.

I would like to end this article with a few words about my go style and about the game in general.

For the most part I never studied go. I learned by playing and I always played as hard as I could. This would leave me drained afterward and when I had to play one game after another it was really hard on me. All the more so because in the majority of my games I got into time trouble. It is all well and good to suggest that it would have been better to ration my time more efficiently, but things do not always proceed in such an ideal manner. I would not usually prepare for a game in any particular way, nor do any research, so when I played I needed time to explore all of the possibilities.

On occasion I would produce exquisite moves and these too were not the outcome of research beforehand but ideas I came up with in the heat of battle. I would wonder if a certain move was possible and I discovered many new moves as a result.

Temperamentally, I cannot say for sure whether I am an optimist or a pessimist about go. I would be inclined to categorize myself as a pessimist, but then I consider players like Fujisawa Hosai and Kitani, who are perfect examples of the type, and I cannot believe that my own approach to the game really is the same as theirs. But I cannot go so far as to label myself an optimist either.

Early in my career I was a bit fragile psychologically when I played an important game but I had overcome this problem by the time I captured the record seven titles. Do not confuse my attitude with a player of the optimistic type but at that time I was confident of victory every time I sat at the board. During that time I set the record of 29 consecutive wins in tournament and match play. If I had performed the equivalent accomplishment in boxing I would have been declared the Heavyweight Champion of the World. As a result of possessing such a reputation, I won many games effortlessly; my opponents would often lose without putting up any resistance at all.

My strong point was always my play in the middle game. I would not try to come up with stunning moves in the opening but merely bide

my time until that phase was over with. The more complicated the position became the greater my confidence in my ultimate victory. Even today when I look back on myself during my best years it seems to me that I played a truly powerful game.



(Drawing by Kondo Hidezo)

I am a volatile person, both as a go player and as a man. There are people who are convinced that their preconceptions are absolutely correct and they see no need to change. However, I am not one of these people. In a sense, such a way of thinking is disciplined and one of principle, but it can also be rigid and closed-minded. In go a flexible attitude is essential so as to respond quickly to the multitude of variations that appear during a game.

As a player I was both precocious and late-blooming and I cannot say for sure which trait was predominant. Go Seigen was obviously the precocious type, playing as he did in his prime while still in his early twenties. I won the bulk of my own titles, however, after I entered my forties.

Perhaps the crux of the matter lies in the fact that I really had no teacher or model to emulate when I was a youngster. I am sometimes asked which great master of the past made the greatest impression on me and I am lost for an answer. If pressed I might remark that there was a time when I would study games of Shusaku or Shuei and no doubt I appreciated their skill. But I never really got carried away and wholeheartedly pursued these studies. Besides that I was never truly apprenticed to a go master. My sensei took part in the women's go world and could not serve adequately as a role model. Shusai Meijin held

study groups for children, but to us in-seis he was a lordly figure, august and unapproachable. Remember, too, that even as a child I was rude at times, boisterous and impudent. On top of that, I was filled with confidence in my own powers and when I did happen to lose a game I would always blame my own poor moves, never giving my opponent any credit for his superior play. At those times I could become sullen and unpleasant. There is little wonder that no kindhearted teacher took me under his wing as a pupil.

Faced with such conditions I had no recourse but to become strong through my own means. No one showed me the ropes or helped me to refine my technique. I was a lone wolf. Playing go and that alone taught me its hidden secrets. My game depended on no other person; I cut my own path through the wilderness. In every sense of the word the 'Sakata style' is my own creation.

To me the game of go is like a marathon. It is a long, drawnout contest that poses obstacles that must be overcome at every step of the way. From the opening through the middle game into the endgame play proceeds at a slow but inexorable pace. Often the win is undecided until the very end of the game. In the world of sports go most resembles the marathon, that most solitary competition, and although go also contains intellectual and artistic elements, on a basic level it is played out by lone individuals.

For those of us who have devoted our lives to mastering the nuances of go, it has been essential to recognize that one fact: a player is absolutely isolated during a game with no source of strength to draw upon but that which resides within him-

self. If one does not accept this fact one cannot expect to be successful. In go one must find a move that one believes in and then accept the responsibility for playing it. An overly dependent person or someone easily cowed by authority would find it difficult to display the full scope of his powers. However, if one is resigned to the solitary nature of the game, one develops the character and stamina to handle the pressure and this in turn sharpens one's technical skills.

But technical skills alone are clearly insufficient for success. Top players today are more or less evenly matched. Each has his own strengths and weaknesses, but in terms of their overall level of skill the difference is negligible. However, some enjoy much greater practical success than others; obviously outstanding technique is not enough to guarantee that one will win games.

From the past go masters have left us various records of their games which we can view both as guideposts of history and the distillation of their lives and thought. At times masterpieces of go have been handed down and these represent indeed the epitome of human intellectual artistry. If one can play through games such as these and feel the drama, the tension that the players experienced at the time . . . if one can grasp intuitively that a character defect in one of the players made the loss inevitable and then investigate the variations that were the concrete manifestation of that defect, then one's understanding and skill are bound to increase. This is the true value of the collection of games a go master leaves behind. I hope that future generations view my own work in the same light.

Sakata — From the Other Side of the Board

During his long and eventful career Sakata has touched many levels, from friends and family to teachers, rivals, writers and fans. On the pages that follow several of these people share their impressions of the man and his art. In many ways they tell the 'other side' of the story: the candid and revealing one that an author writing his memoirs so often glosses over. Sakata's story is interesting enough, as well as important enough, to merit another, perhaps more objective look.

Like Father Like Son — Sakata Akira (nephew)

My grandfather, Eishichi (Sakata Eio's father), opened a go parlor around 1950 when I was a child. Outside he hung a sign that said, 'Go Center: Sakata 2-dan' and despite the fact that he had only three boards to offer his guests the

place was crowded almost every day. What a life! Playing go all day and only the chickens to look after in the backyard . . .

Grandfather hated to lose at go. When he lost he would spend hours debating the game with his opponent: 'Look at this, what if I played here or, well then, here? What about that?' On top of

that, he was not a sociable fellow. Guests would be kept standing as he slapped one half-baked move after another on one of his cronies.

He was rather tall and thin, so besides his personality I imagine that my uncle Eio must have inherited most of his physical qualities from him as well.

A Little Rascal — Masubuchi Tatsuko 6-dan

The first time I saw Sakata was when his father brought him to my *dojo*. Back then he was still in elementary school. His hair was cropped close to the scalp and he had a mischievous glint in his eye. The day he formally became my student we played a game to commemorate the occasion. I think he took nine stones; his strength was perhaps that of an amateur 1-kyu player. He had a strong will but his go was uncultivated, he had little understanding of joseki or anything else. From the beginning his only aim was to kill the white stones. It was not hard to dodge his attack and win the game.

Young Sakata was enamored with what he believed to be his real skill. When he lost he was dumbfounded, all the more so since he had played with such a large handicap. Then he tilted his head and looked up at me with a strange, oddly appreciative expression on his face. His father commented that, 'He is always determined to win, so he might have a promising career in go.'

In my *dojo* ten or so youngster came to receive instruction, but in no time at all Sakata was the strongest. He advanced at such a rapid rate that it was not more than a year later that I introduced him to my associates at the Nihon Ki-in for training as an insei.

We all had a lot of fun that year. I was not a strict disciplinarian; each child aspires to his own fate and I never wanted to dictate what that might turn out to be. Rather, I considered myself to be an 'older sister' of my charges. We played together often. I remember during the New Year's celebration we stayed out a little too late and I was reprimanded by some of the families of my students. What I recall most vividly of that night, though, was Sakata zestfully singing his heart out in front of the crowd while one of my other students hid shyly in another room.

Later in the year I became aware of the fact that Sakata had started gambling with his opponents at go. For one training to be a professional player this was unconscionable and I asked

Sakata's father to come to my office to discuss the matter. During our meeting it became clear that Sakata junior was not acting on his own: it was actually the father that was making the bets. Surprised though I was to discover this, I made sure that the gambling never took place again.

I learned a great deal about Sakata the go player that year. To begin with, he could always, even as a child, see deeply into a position. Not only that, but at the same time he could glance over at the board next to him and read out the variations there also.

Sakata was part of a study group directed by a kindly older man named Fukuda. At times Sakata would get carried away and start to conduct the lessons himself. Rather than feeling put upon, though, Fukuda Sensei would sit nodding in admiration: 'I see . . . That's a good variation . . . yes, indeed . . .'

However, others were not so indulgent with the tendency Sakata had to blurt out anything that came to mind. I can recall several occasions when he was rapped sharply on the head by one of his elders for impertinent remarks.

Unparalleled Mastery of Reading — Yamabe Toshiro 9-dan

In 1947 I was 22 years old and 4-dan and the youngest of the group of professional players that left the traditional world of go *en masse* to form the Igo Shinsha. Actually we were all young players; Maeda Nobuaki at 41 was the oldest. It was during the difficult years after the war. There was no real Nihon Ki-in. All that truly existed was the Oteai and we decided to organize our own Oteai.

The 28-year-old Sakata was already spoken of as a future star. It was essential that he join our dissident group so as to draw attention to our organization and also to attract the younger go players. A three-game match with Go Seigen had already been scheduled and if Sakata could win it the go world would have to take notice of us.

But it was not to be. Sakata could not win a single game. The result of that match more or less sealed the fate of the Igo Shinsha. Within months the group was disbanded and the players joined the reorganized Nihon Ki-in.

Sakata's go can be summed up very easily: he possesses an unparalleled mastery of reading which allows him complete freedom to pursue any variation to its conclusion. Also, his skill in the middle game is incomparable, whether he is at-

tacking, lightly sidestepping a blow or making eyes for an endangered group of stones. He displays a bewildering array of moves, counter-moves, feints and thrusts. His play is fluid and lively, never static. It is when the position becomes most complex that he plays his best.

Most fascinating of all is when one watches Sakata in action, in an important game or match. He sits hunched over the board with a worried expression mumbling to himself, 'What did I do?' or 'I'm lost for sure.' The intense thought and tension he is experiencing are obvious. For observers this opportunity to see the physical basis of Sakata's artistry is the most thrilling part of the event.

Of course, everyone wonders what his next move will be. As a professional I can usually predict correctly 80 per cent of the time what the next move will be during a game. But Sakata has a knack of proving my predictions false time and time again. I find myself thinking, 'Indeed, what a clever move that is.' Even when I am in the analysis room next door surrounded by a pack of top-level professionals Sakata can set the room abuzz. We will have spent quite a bit of time analyzing a position and, say, come to the conclusion that no matter how much skill he might possess there is no way Sakata can save some stones. Then when he finally plays, the move is brought into the room and we are stunned. 'Is such a move possible?' There is no way to describe his abilities as anything less than magical.

If Sakata Had Never Existed I Would Have Won Many, Many More Titles — Takagawa Kaku 9-dan

In 1961 Sakata became challenger for my Honinbo title and a magazine wrote that for ten years he had always been 'a suitor, never the betrothed'. But for me he was nothing but trouble; I cannot imagine a more unwelcome suitor. I was not only defeated by Sakata but stripped bare. For quite a while I could not even bring myself to replay the games of the 16th Honinbo title match. Just thinking about them was enough to make me sick and to be honest I couldn't even bear to hear his name spoken.

Be that as it may, I recently got a chance to examine those games and relive that period of my life in detail. It was when the collection of my complete games was being published and at the same time *Igo Club* magazine was chronicling my

life and career. [Much of that material was incorporated into the article on Takagawa in GW41.] I was a bit surprised at what I saw when I reviewed that match. In the first game I made a horrendous mistake, but even so I managed to throw the outcome into doubt with determined play. In the fourth game, my only win of the match, I led every step of the way, came up with a crippling move to settle the issue and won decisively.

The three other losses I suffered in the second, third, and fifth games were close contests that I lost by 1 1/2-point, half-point, and half-point margins respectively. Bad luck lost me this match is what many people might say about what happened, but I am not one of them. No matter how slight the margin of victory, the winner of a seven-game match must be considered the stronger of the two. If luck plays a part in the outcome it is on the side of the better player. This is my considered opinion after many years of match play. A professional should never seek excuses.

With Sakata intuition played the most important role during a game. Most players, including myself, analyze the overall position and decide on our moves as a result of this comprehensive overview, but for Sakata his first impression of the layout of the board was the most significant. Not only that but intuition was the essential part of his decision to *play* a move. On an elementary level this philosophy of go is diametrically opposed to mine.

I was always celebrated in a fashion for my endgame play while Sakata was not, but I think here he was terribly underestimated. His appraisal of the largest move on the board was always startling. I have rarely encountered anyone who could calculate the value of a move as well as he. But what startled me more than anything was the way he intuitively chose even his endgame plays. I would spend hours analyzing the final moves of the game only to find that Sakata, as usual, had outfoxed me.

Sakata also played an ambitious, greedy kind of game. He was always intent on taking territory and as a result he often left weak stones scattered about the board. Yet he was unrivaled in his ability to make life for those stones. It was simply splendid how he could create formations that defied analysis. Even top professionals like myself could not always determine if one or another of his groups could be killed or not.

Everyone knows how Sakata lost dramatically

to Hashimoto in the 6th Honinbo title match, but he was already at that time a top-class player. If one omits Go Seigen from the list he would have to be considered the strongest player of that era. It is indeed strange that for eight years in a row he missed becoming challenger for my Honinbo title, but I guess I was just lucky. Ironically (and much to my chagrin), I must admit that Sakata's failure to become challenger was a significant factor in my retaining my title for so long. On the other hand, he won everything else in sight; if Sakata had never arrived on the scene I surely would have captured dozens more titles.

The Demeanor of a Champion — Ezaki Masanori (writer)

I first met Sakata in 1961 during the Honinbo match. Of course this was a memorable year for him but it was special for me too, since this was the first important match I had covered. When I think back to that time my strongest impression is of the youthful appearance of Sakata, particularly so when compared to the older, distinguished-looking Takagawa.

During the game itself I was struck by the intensity with which Sakata played and something else. As he sat thinking over his next move he would constantly blurt out pained comments in a distressed voice. I split my time between the playing room and the analysis room next door, where the assembled professionals were reviewing the course of the game. Towards the end the consensus was that Sakata had the worse position and considering his harried appearance I was convinced that he would lose. But immediately after the game his face brightened suddenly and he began speaking in an animated voice. I remember wondering what on earth was going on. Then I discovered that he had won by a point and a half, and I realized that I had been completely deceived by the outward manifestations of that driving energy that propelled Sakata.

Over the next few years I got to know Sakata very well. I saw him in social situations, during tournament and match play and I even played him, obviously receiving handicap stones, for magazine articles. I introduced him to Kawabata Yasunari and was present at the game they played for a go magazine.

What I saw during that period impressed me even further with the man. After he captured the Honinbo title he seemed to grow more dignified. A true champion possesses an unmistakable air

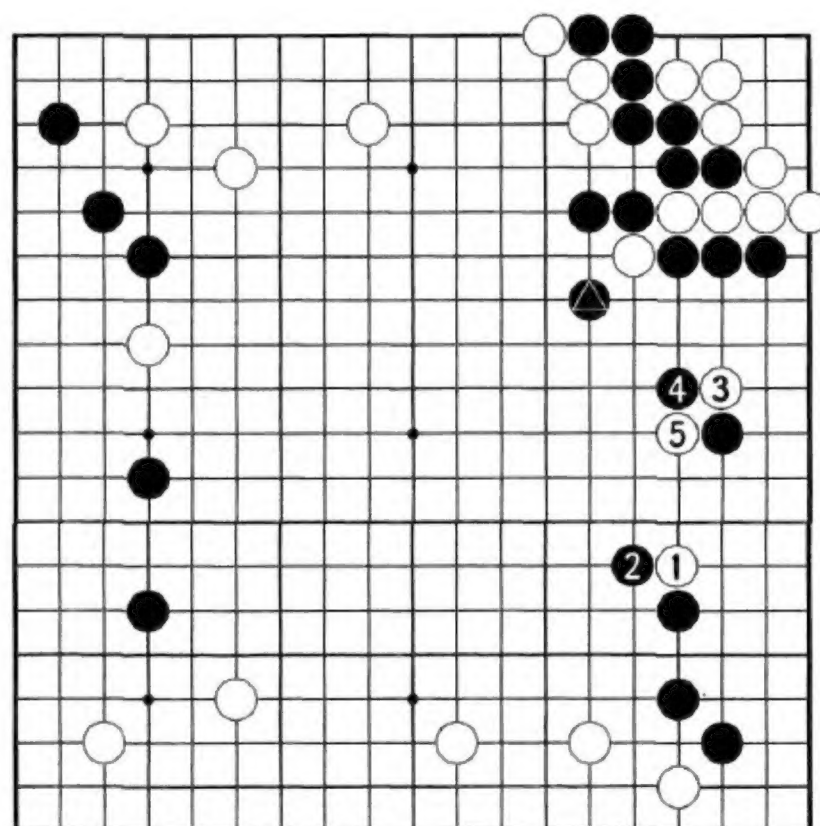
of importance and Sakata was a true champion. At times he used this quality as a weapon to overpower his opponents by the force of his personality. This factor seemed to be intimately bound up with his natural outspokenness.

This champion's demeanor appeared in other situations as well. When a match is held, every game is played at a different site, usually a famous hotel or resort. Often the Emperor or a member of his family has stayed at one of these places and invariably the best room in the hotel is prepared for the visit; afterward it is considered particularly special.

When Sakata played a title game at one of these resorts it was always assumed that he would be assigned to sleep in one of these special rooms. He would also be tended to by the best maids. It might not seem as though this is a big deal, but not every player could maintain his composure in such a situation. Some would be overwhelmed by such exalted treatment and spend a sleepless night in that room. For Sakata it was a natural prerequisite of his position.

In the Heat of Battle Sakata Often Played Exquisite Moves — Cho Chikun 9-dan

There has been so much written about Sakata that I doubt that I have anything interesting to add. But I suffered one of the most stinging defeats of my career at his hands, so I may be more qualified than most to describe his exceptional talent.



Dia. 1

Diagram 1 is taken from the first game of the 1964 Honinbo match against Takagawa. Black has just fenced in the white stone with his

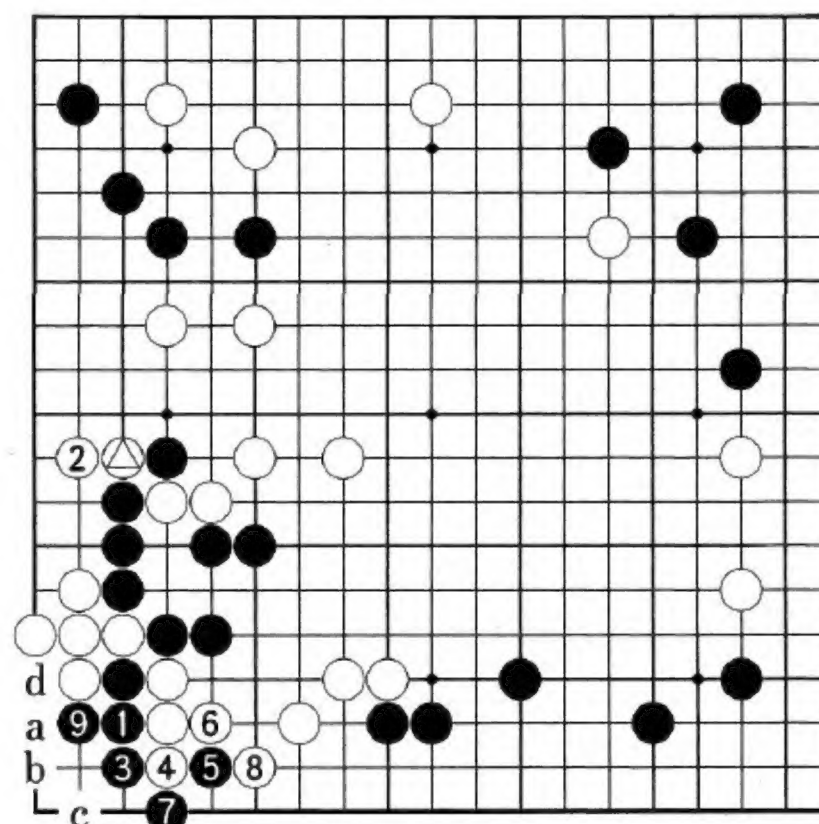
marked stone. After playing White 1, 3 and 5 are examples of the inimitable Sakata style. The outlook after this is not necessarily bright for White and it is not even clear whether these moves will prove to have been well-played, but it is a common theme in Sakata's games for him to initiate such hand-to-hand combat.

This position in Dia. 2 is taken from the second game of the 1963 Honinbo match, also against Takagawa. White has just cut with the marked stone when Black suddenly pushes out at 1 in the corner, another example of vintage Sakata. This move creates the potential for capturing White's marked stone (by *oioishi* or swiftly disappearing liberties) so White has little choice but to play 2. Then Black 3 and 5 are exquisite moves that successfully complete Sakata's plan. After Black 9, a ko favorable to him developed with White A through Black D.

It is at times like these, in the thick of battle, that Sakata often came up with exquisite moves. Perhaps that is where his nickname 'Razorsharp' originated.

Sakata played a very ordinary opening. He never schemed for an advantage there. It was when the stones started to become entangled that he displayed his true power. That was when he would start to read deeply, then read some more, and then still more. Therefore, it was natural that he often discovered exquisite moves during those times. Reading was his most deadly weapon, so concepts like 'the shape of stones' or 'positional judgment' did not even come into consideration. If he could exercise his reading skill anything was possible; by always searching for the best move there was no need to make a judgment about the

position. Sakata's special strength lay in his determination to always keep the pressure on, no matter how much of an advantage he might enjoy.



Dia. 2

Like Go Seigen, Sakata played a dodging, amorphous type of game, so it was natural that they both often traded territory on a large scale (*furikawari*). But whereas Go traded groups based on his intuitive appraisal of the situation, Sakata would do so based on the outcome of his reading. There is a great difference between the two styles.

I learned a great deal from Sakata. Perhaps the thing I recall most vividly from my own encounters with him was the vivid energy in the moves he made.

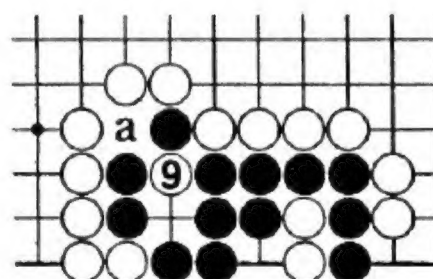
36 Life and Death Patterns

Continued from page 42

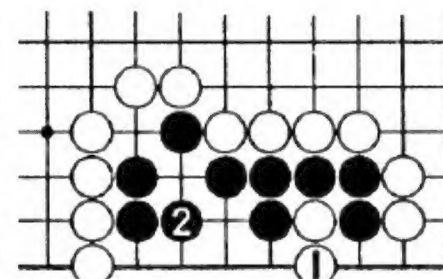
Dia. 3. White throws in again at 9. The problem for Black is that he can't play at 'a'.

Dia. 4. White 1 is premature. Black seizes the vital point with 2 and can't be killed.

(Let's Go, February 1983)



Dia. 3



Dia. 4

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